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Big names clash at the Club World Cup

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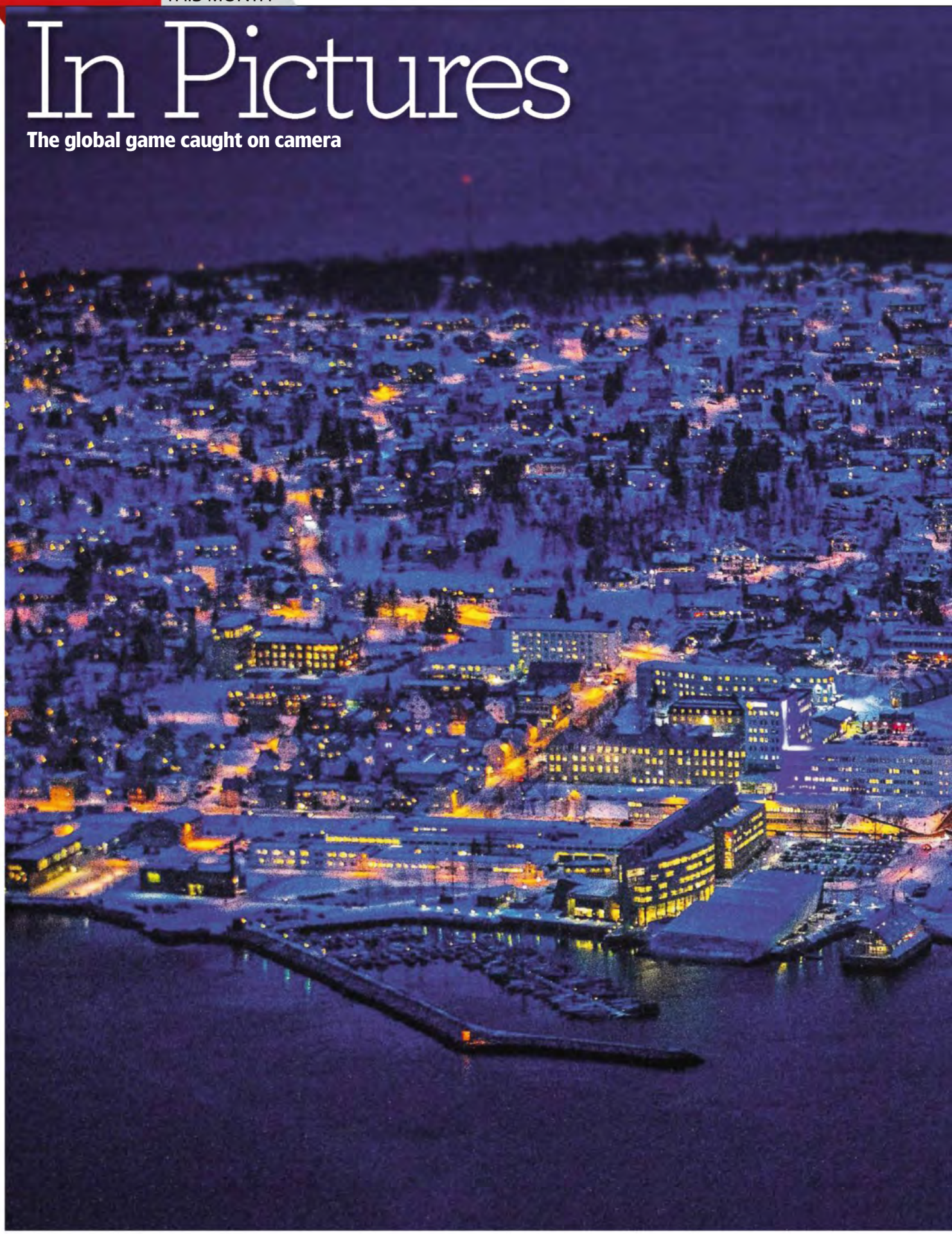
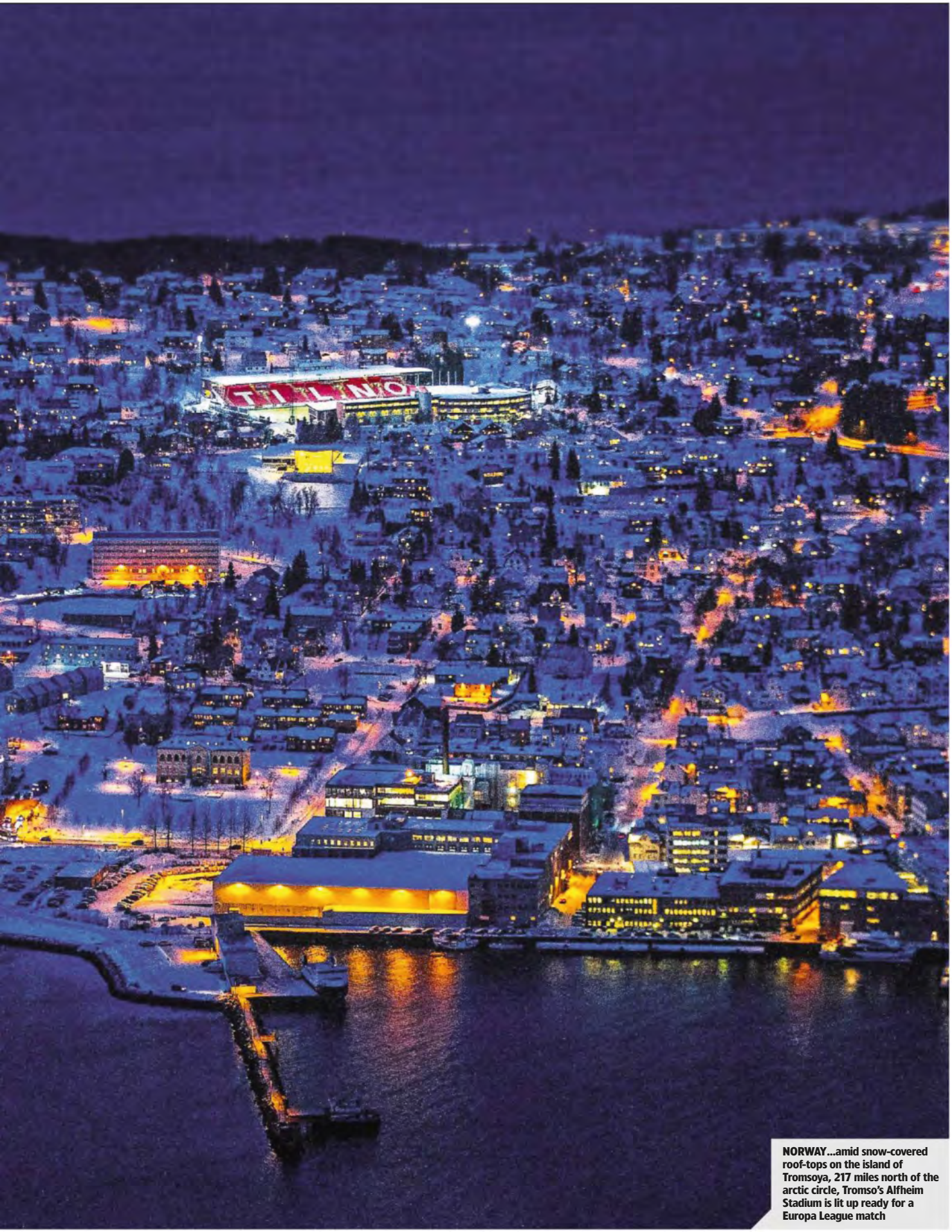
In Pictures

The global game caught on camera



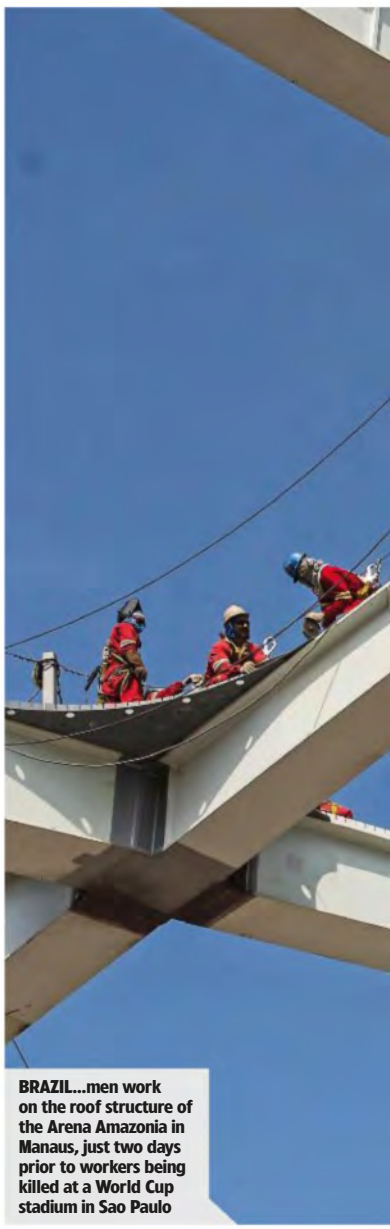


NORWAY...amid snow-covered roof-tops on the island of Tromsoya, 217 miles north of the arctic circle, Tromso's Alfheim Stadium is lit up ready for a Europa League match

EGYPT...Al Ahly fans celebrate after their team beat Orlando Pirates to win the African Champions League

ENGLAND...Manchester United's Tom Cleverley is surrounded by five Tottenham Hotspur players during their Premier League game

GERMANY...Bayern Munich striker Mario Mandzukic (left) and Borussia Dortmund's Kevin Grosskreutz square up to each other



BRAZIL...men work on the roof structure of the Arena Amazonia in Manaus, just two days prior to workers being killed at a World Cup stadium in Sao Paulo

MEXICO...Oribe Peralta of Mexico challenges New Zealand's Jake Butler and goalkeeper Glenn Moss in their World Cup play-off

AUSTRALIA...Kwame Yeboah celebrates his goal for Brisbane Roar against Western Sydney Wanderers

PICTURES OF THE MONTH QR CODE

To see more of the best photos from the month, scan the QR code using any free QR reader that can be downloaded to your smartphone. You can also see the images by logging on to bit.ly/1k5hHWe

FROM THE EDITOR

Congratulations to Cristiano Ronaldo, *World Soccer*'s 2014 World Player of the Year. It is always difficult selecting an individual in a non-tournament year, but Ronaldo's performances, particularly in the World Cup qualifying play-off against Sweden, make him a deserved winner.

This year, in a change to the format, our awards were decided by a panel of journalists and pundits from around the world. We strived to select panellists from different countries and backgrounds, who are united by their breadth of knowledge of the game over the past 12 months.

> It is always difficult selecting an individual in a non-tournament year, but Ronaldo's performances make him a deserved winner

Elsewhere, our World Cup coverage steps up a gear this month. Brazil correspondent Tim Vickery begins a series of columns on the major talking points in the host country ahead of next year's finals, starting with the complex issue of stadiums (page 10) and we review the qualifying campaigns of a further four teams: Bosnia, England, Greece and Russia (page 106).

We hope, as with previous World Cups, that *World Soccer* becomes an indispensable guide over the coming months. However, unlike previous tournaments, we are now available on the iPad (right) and other tablets, from all the usual outlets.

Gavin Hamilton, Editor

10 SIGNIFICANT EVENTS THIS MONTH

1. Cristiano Ronaldo is *World Soccer*'s World Player of the Year page 48
2. The 2014 World Cup draw ..... page 9
3. The Club World Cup kicks off in Morocco ..... page 26
4. Al Ahly win a record eighth African Champions League ..... page 35
5. Marcello Lippi guides Guangzhou Evergrande to the Asian Champions League title ..... pages 45 and 60
6. Nigeria win the Under-17 World Cup ..... page 90
7. Sporting Kansas City win the 2013 MLS Cup ..... page 32
8. Zahir Belounis is finally allowed to leave Qatar ..... page 58
9. World Cup stadium accident kills two workers in Sao Paulo ..... page 10
10. Stromsgodset win the Norwegian league title ..... page 92

BRAZIL

2014 World Cup draw renews old rivalries

A World Cup draw which began in sombre style, featuring a tribute to Nelson Mandela and an appeal for peace on the streets from Sepp Blatter, ended with the maximum frenetic drama possible being wrung from expectation ahead of the finals in Brazil in June and July.

Hosts and favourites Brazil will kick off against Croatia; England face a hot and humid start against Italy in Manaus; Germany's Joachim Low will come up against the man who launched his career, US coach Jurgen Klinsmann; and champions Spain begin against the Dutch opponents who tried in vain to kick them off the pitch in the 2010 Final.

Add into that yet a further repeat for Argentina and Nigeria, the match-up after which Diego Maradona notoriously failed a dope test in 1994, and the media can make the very most of the ride all the way back to Brazil this coming summer.

Blatter took the opportunity to issue a barely veiled appeal to Brazilians to forget about repeating the Confederations Cup demonstrations in 2014.

Glamour and glitz...the 2014 World Cup draw

He said: "It was time the World Cup came back to Brazil. Next year will be 60 years since Brazil first organised it and, in the meantime, Brazil have won the trophy five times so it is justice to this country where football has such a value.

"The greatest humanist in the world [Nelson Mandela) said that sport and football connected people and I appeal first to the population of Brazil, through this World Cup, please come together and join everybody because it's a game for you but then also to the fans around the world in the 208 other national associations."

As arranged in advance, Brazil were slotted into Group A. Group G appears to be the toughest – the most likely to be labelled "Group of Death" – while Groups C and E are the comparative weakest followed by F and H.

The Group D match-up means that at least one former world champion will not make it beyond the group stage.

Keir Radnedge

"It's a big fiesta, the FIFA World Cup in Brazil, and I would like to thank the government and governors for all the work that has been done...it will be a great World Cup, perhaps the greatest of all times"

FIFA president Sepp Blatter gets carried away during the World Cup draw in Bahia

2014 World Cup schedule, group by group

(all kick-off times BST)

GROUP A

● BRAZIL ● CROATIA ● MEXICO ● CAMEROON

12.06.14	Brazil v Croatia	Arena de Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo,	(9pm)
13.06.14	Mexico v Cameroon	Arena das Dunas, Natal	(5pm)
17.06.14	Brazil v Mexico	Estadio Castelao, Fortaleza	(8pm)
18.06.14	Cameroon v Croatia	Arena Amazonia, Manaus	(11pm)
23.06.14	Cameroon v Brazil	Estadio Nacional, Brasilia	(9pm)
23.06.14	Croatia v Mexico	Arena Pernambuco, Recife	(9pm)

GROUP B

● SPAIN ● HOLLAND ● CHILE ● AUSTRALIA

13.06.14	Spain v Holland	Arena Fonte Nova, Salvador	(8pm)
13.06.14	Chile v Australia	Arena Pantanal, Cuiaba	(11pm)
18.06.14	Spain v Chile	Estadio do Maracana, Rio de Janeiro	(8pm)
18.06.14	Australia v Holland	Estadio Beira-Rio, Porto Alegre	(5pm)
23.06.14	Australia v Spain	Arena da Baixada, Curitiba	(5pm)
23.06.14	Holland v Chile	Arena de Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo (	5pm)

GROUP C

● COLOMBIA ● GREECE ● IVORY COAST ● JAPAN

14.06.14	Colombia v Greece	Estadio Mineirao, Belo Horizonte	(5pm)
15.06.14	Ivory Coast v Japan	Arena Pernambuco, Recife	(2am)
19.06.14	Colombia v Ivory Coast	Estadio Nacional, Brasilia	(5pm)
19.06.14	Japan v Greece	Arena das Dunas, Natal	(11pm)
24.06.14	Japan v Colombia	Arena Pantanal, Cuiaba	(9pm)
24.06.14	Greece v Ivory Coast	Estadio Castelao, Fortaleza	(9pm)

GROUP D

● URUGUAY ● COSTA RICA ● ENGLAND ● ITALY

14.06.14	Uruguay v Costa Rica	Estadio Castelao, Fortaleza	(8pm)
14.06.14	England v Italy	Arena Amazonia, Manaus	(11pm)
19.06.14	Uruguay v England	Arena de Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo	(8pm)
20.06.14	Italy v Costa Rica	Arena Pernambuco, Recife	(5pm)
24 .06.14	Italy v Uruguay	Arena das Dunas, Natal	(5pm)
24.06.14	Costa Rica v England	Estadio Mineirao, Belo Horizonte	(5pm)

GROUP E

● SWITZERLAND ● ECUADOR ● FRANCE ● HONDURAS

15.06.14	Switzerland v Ecuador	Estadio Nacional, Brasilia	(5pm)
15.06.14	France v Honduras	Estadio Beira-Rio, Porto Alegre	(8pm)
20.06.14	Switzerland v France	Arena Fonte Nova, Salvador	(8pm)
20.06.14	Honduras v Ecuador	Arena da Baixada, Curitiba	(11pm)
25.06.14	Honduras v Switzerland	Arena Amazonia, Manaus	(9pm)
25.06.14	Ecuador v France	Estadio do Maracana, Rio de Janeiro	(9pm)

GROUP F

● ARGENTINA ● BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA ● IRAN ● NIGERIA

15.06.14	Arg v Bosnia-H	Estadio do Maracana, Rio de Janeiro	(11pm)
16.06.14	Iran v Nigeria	Arena da Baixada, Curitiba	(8pm)
21.06.14	Argentina v Iran	Estadio Mineirao, Belo Horizonte	(5pm)
21.06.14	Nigeria v Bosnia-H	Arena Pantanal, Cuiaba	(11pm)
25.06.14	Nigeria v Argentina	Estadio Beira-Rio, Porto Alegre	(5pm)
25.06.14	Bosnia-H v Iran	Arena Fonte Nova, Salvador	(5pm)

GROUP G

● GERMANY ● PORTUGAL ● GHANA ● UNITED STATES

16.06.14	Germany v Portugal	Arena Fonte Nova, Salvador	(5pm)
16.06.14	Ghana v USA	Arena das Dunas, Natal	(11pm)
21.06.14	Germany v Ghana	Estadio Castelao, Fortaleza	(8pm)
22.06.14	USA v Portugal	Arena Amazonia, Manaus	(11pm)
26.06.14	USA v Germany	Arena Pernambuco, Recife	(5pm)
26.06.14	Portugal v Ghana	Estadio Nacional, Brasilia	(5pm)

GROUP H

● BELGIUM ● ALGERIA ● RUSSIA ● SOUTH KOREA

17.06.14	Belgium v Algeria	Estadio Mineirao, Belo Horizonte	(5pm)
17.06.14	Russia v South Korea	Arena Pantanal, Cuiaba	(11pm)
22.06.14	Belgium v Russia	Estadio do Maracana, Rio de Janeiro	(5pm)
22.06.14	South Korea v Algeria	Estadio Beira-Rio, Porto Alegre	(8pm)
26.06.14	South Korea v Belgium	Arena de Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo	(9pm)
26.06.14	Algeria v Russia	Arena da Baixada, Curitiba	(9pm)

SECOND ROUND

28.06.14	(2R1) Win Gp A v Run-up Gp B	Est Mineirao, Belo Horizonte	(5pm)
28.06.14	(2R2) Win Gp C v Run-up Gp D	Estadio do Maracana, Rio	(9pm)
29.06.14	(2R3) Win Gp B v Run-up Gp A	Estadio Castelao, Fortaleza	(5pm)
29.06.14	(2R4) Win Gp D v Run-up Gp C	Arena Pernambuco, Recife	(9pm)
30.06.14	(2R5) Win Gp E v Run-up Gp F	Estadio Nacional, Brasilia	(5pm)
30.06.14	(2R6) Win Gp G v Run-up Gp H	Est Beira-Rio, Porto Alegre	(9pm)
01.07.14	(2R7) Win Gp F v Run-up Gp E	A. de Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo	(5pm)
01.07.14	(2R8) Win Gp H v Run-up Gp G	Arena Fonte Nova, Salvador	(9pm)

QUARTER-FINALS

04.07.14	(QF2) Win 2R5 v Win 2R6	Est do Maracana, Rio de Janeiro	(5pm)
04.07.14	(QF1) Win 2R1 v Win 2R2	Estadio Castelao, Fortaleza	(9pm)

QUARTER-FINALS

05.07.14	(QF4) Win 2R7 v Win 2R8	Estadio Nacional, Brasilia	(5pm)
05.07.14	(QF3) Win 2R3 v Win 2R4	Arena Fonte Nova, Salvador	(9pm)

SEMI-FINALS

08.07.14	Win QF1 v Win QF2	Estadio Mineirao, Belo Horizonte	(9pm)
09.07.14	Win QF3 v Win QF4	Arena de Sao Paulo, Sao Paulo	(9pm)

THIRD-PLACE PLAY-OFF

12.07.14	Estadio Nacional, Brasilia	(9pm)

FINAL

13.07.14	Estadio do Maracana, Rio de Janeiro	(8pm)

WORLD CUP 2014

Tim VICKERY

THE VIEW FROM BRAZIL

Over budget, under strain and behind schedule – Brazil's stadiums will leave a controversial legacy

It may have been human error. It could have been mechanical fault. Or maybe the heavy rain had made the soil unstable. But for whatever reason, a crane collapsed onto the new stadium in Sao Paulo on November 27, killing two construction workers and bringing the total of 2014 World Cup stadium fatalities to four, with one worker having been killed on the site in Manaus and another in Brasilia.

In addition to the tragic loss of life, the accident provided yet more negative publicity for the tournament preparations at a time when Brazil is under the global spotlight as never before. Once people had died, a rigid approach to completion deadlines could only come across as being in dubious taste. And so, nearly a week later, FIFA bowed to the inevitable. Six of the 2014 stadiums are up and running, having been tested in the Confederations Cup. The remaining six have been sprinting in an attempt to meet FIFA's "non-negotiable" completion date of December 31.

With four weeks to go, though, FIFA announced that Sao Paulo, along with Curitiba and Cuiaba, will not be ready in time. Most behind schedule is Curitiba, with about 85 per cent of the work completed, and where FIFA secretary-general Jerome Valcke, on a visit in October, declared that there "was not a minute to lose".

Aftermath of tragedy...the ruined section of the new stadium in Sao Paulo after a crane collapsed, killing two workers

Construction specialist Marcelo Tessler doubts that the remaining three stadiums – in Manaus, Natal and Porto Alegre – will be ready by the end of the year, stating: "Perhaps the Arena das Dunas [in Natal] will be handed over, but it's unlikely.

"It's important to remember that the area around the stadiums requires a lot of work and attention to detail. Bearing this in mind, I think that everything will be ready by the end of March. And FIFA, despite the end of the year deadline, must in fact be working on this type of time-frame."

This appeared to be confirmed by the reaction from the top echelons. "We are not in crisis mode," stressed Valcke, while according to FIFA president Sepp Blatter the problems "are now so small we can close our eyes".

Costing plenty

Brazilian society, perhaps belatedly, now seems to have its eyes wide open to the fact that staging the World Cup is costing them plenty and not giving much back. Being so slow out of the blocks, plus the politicking and bureaucratic delays that plague the country, mean that the legacy to society is hugely disappointing.

In late November it was announced that 14 more infrastructure projects have been cut from the list of World Cup responsibilities. Most are projects of public transport in Brazil's clogged-up cities – the very area where society had most to gain. But, through lack of planning, rather than lack of funding, there is simply not enough time to put project into practice.

Remarkably, this now means that for the 2014 World Cup more is being spent on stadiums (£2billion) than on public transport (£1.8bn). And the fact the new stadiums are so impressive also creates a PR problem. One point was made over and over again by protestors in the mass demonstrations that flared in June and July: if the Brazilian state is capable of building "FIFA standard" stadiums, why is it so manifestly unable to

"I know of no wedding that did not happen because the bride did not arrive on time. Delayed, that's all, and the wedding always takes place. The World Cup will happen"

Brazilian Sports Minister Aldo Rebelo insists it will be alright on the night

deliver the same seal of quality in its health, education and transport services?

There is also the issue of the location of the new stadiums. Megalomania ran wild in Brasilia, the nation's capital, which has the most expensive of the 2014 stadiums. But the venue's long-term viability is questionable – and that also applies to Natal. The cases of Manaus and Cuiaba are even more so. Elsewhere, though, if the legacy for Brazilian society is disappointing, there should be an interesting return for the country's football.

In this sense the tournament can be seen as an heir to the tradition of the 1950 World Cup, which planted interesting seeds of decentralisation, taking the action out beyond the traditional big two of Sao Paulo

Once people had died, a rigid approach to completion deadlines could only come across as being in dubious taste

and Rio de Janeiro. Of course, the giant Maracana was constructed in Rio, but another new stadium was built in Belo Horizonte, which by the mid 1960s was starting to establish itself as an important centre. And the 1950 World Cup also went down south, to Curitiba and Porto Alegre, both of which – the latter especially – have since taken on huge significance in the culture of the Brazilian game. Back in 1950 there was even a match up in Recife, in the north east – a relatively poor region where the big clubs have huge fan bases but rarely punch their weight at national level.

Brazil's second World Cup is tipped heavily towards the north east, where between them Recife, Salvador, Fortaleza and Natal will stage a third of the tournament. Perhaps in 50 years, people looking back will gloss over the fact that some of the stadiums were late and over budget. Instead they may come to the conclusion that, for all its flaws, the 2014 World Cup at least gave a significant boost to football in Brazil's north east. WS

HEROES & VILLAINS

In the record books...Son

SON HEUNG-MIN

The Bayer Leverkusen forward became the first South Korean to score a hat-trick in one of the top European leagues when he netted three times against his old club, Hamburg, in the Bundesliga.

ROMAN WEIDENFELLER

At the age of 33, the Borussia Dortmund goalkeeper received his first senior international cap for Germany, in the 1-0 friendly win against England at Wembley.

ROGERIO CENI

The Brazilian goalkeeper, who made his debut in 1993, beat Pele's long-standing record for most appearances at a Brazilian club when he played his 1,116th game in goal for Sao Paulo in their 1-1 draw at home to Botafogo.

Still going strong...Ceni

ORIBE PERALTA

The Mexico striker scored five goals in his country's 9-3 aggregate win against New Zealand in the World Cup play-offs, including a hat-trick in the 4-2 away leg, as *La Tri* booked their ticket to a sixth successive finals.

KURT ZOUMA

The Saint-Etienne defender was banned for 10 games following a challenge that left Sochaux's Thomas Guerbert with a broken right leg and a dislocated ankle.

Horror tackle...Zouma

UKRAINE

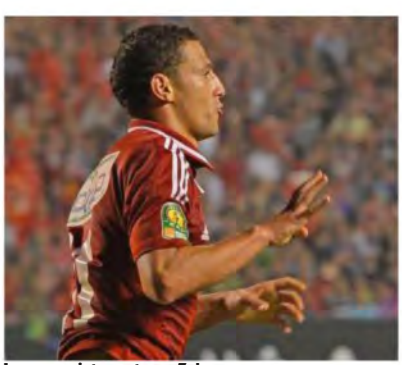
FIFA has ruled that the national team must play their first home qualifier for the 2018 World Cup behind closed doors after fans racially abused their own black player and made Nazi salutes.

SPAIN

The national side faced heavy criticism for playing a lucrative friendly against Equatorial Guinea, a country with one of the world's worst human right records.

AHMED ABDUL ZAHER

Suspended and transfer-listed by Egyptian club Al Ahly after he celebrated the second goal in the final of the African Champions League against Orlando Pirates by making a four-fingered gesture that appeared to sympathise with Islamists.



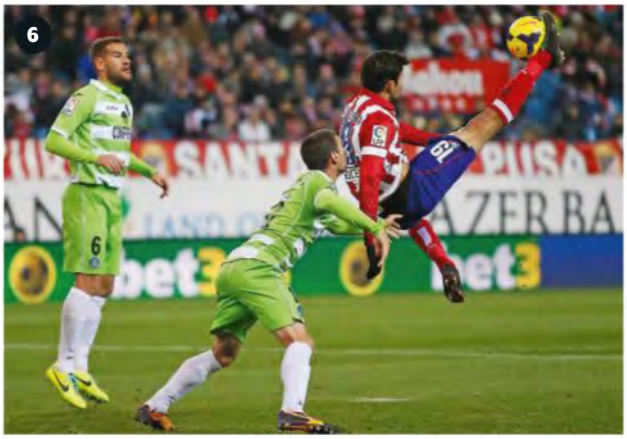
Inappropriate gesture...Zaher

"It's taught me that you have to make the most of every day'

Belgian coach Eric Gerets, currently in charge of Qatari side Lekhwiya, sets out on the road to recovery following a brain haemorrhage

GOALS we'd like to see again

To see video footage of these goals, and many more that we have selected, scan the QR code using any free QR reader that can be downloaded to your smartphone. You can also see the videos by logging on to bit.ly/19eqQXm



1 TOLO BARCELO
Alcudia v Mallorca B
Alcudia's goalkeeper scores a spectacular overhead kick, in injury time, in the Spanish fourth tier.

2 PAUL POGBA
Juventus v Napoli
A sweetly struck volley from just outside the penalty area that goes in off a post.

3 EDNO
Cerezo Osaka v Sagan Tosu
Curls a left-footed free-kick away from the goalkeeper into the far corner from 35 yards in this Emperor Cup fourth-round game.

4 ANDRE-PIERRE GIGNAC
Marseille v Ajaccio
Controls the ball on his chest before turning and volleying into the top corner.

5 HULK
Brazil v Honduras
Two neat back-heeled passes from substitutes Ramires and Robinho, before Hulk turns his man and curls a low shot into the corner.

6 DIEGO COSTA
Atletico Madrid v Getafe
With almost his first touch after coming off the bench, he meets a cross with a stunning overhead kick from near the penalty spot.

WINNERS

NEW YORK COSMOS
Won the NASL Soccer Bowl in their first season back playing after 29 years. Marcos Senna's goal beat Atlanta Silverbacks.

STROMSGODSET
The Norwegian club won their first league title for 43 years with a 4-0 win on the final day of the season.

CRUZEIRO
The first club from outside Rio or Sao Paulo to win the Brazilian league since 2003 – when they themselves last claimed the title.

LYDIA NSEKERA
The first woman to be appointed to FIFA's ExCo was ousted from her post as president of the Burundi FA when she lost the election.

STEAUA BUCHAREST
Without a win in 22 Champions League games, they equalled the record as the worst performers in the group stage.

SAO PAULO
Sudamericana Cup holders, they were knocked out in the semi-finals by Ponte Preta 4-2 on aggregate.

LOSERS

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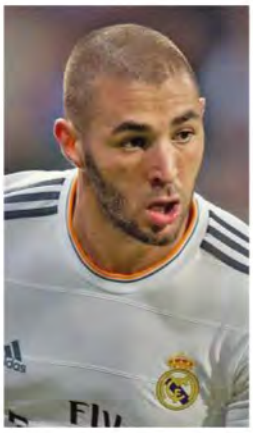
"We would never want to put the spirit of the competition in a negative light"

Pepsi Sweden are forced to apologise following an ill-judged ad campaign in which a Cristiano Ronaldo voodoo doll was tortured

10 TOP JANUARY TRANSFER TARGETS

The big names who could move in the mid-season transfer window



KARIM BENZEMA
No recent transfer window has been complete without several rumours of Real Madrid's French striker heading for the Premier League. Could January 2014 be the time when it actually happens?

IKER CASILLAS
Marginalised at Real Madrid, Spain's goalkeeper and captain is in dire need of a change of club scenery – and he is seriously considering a move abroad, either to England or Serie A.

ANGEL DI MARIA
Now that Gareth Bale is holding court at the Bernabeu, the outstanding Argentinian wide-man is surplus to requirements and cash-rich Monaco are in a strong position to pick up the pieces.

RADAMEL FALCAO
Probably still unpacking after his summer switch from Atletico Madrid to Monaco, the Colombian striker already seems to have his sights set on a top-end Champions League participant.

EZEQUIEL GARAY
With the contract of the Argentinian centre-back due to expire this summer, Benfica have one last chance to cash in and they will be happy for both Manchester clubs to go toe-to-toe in a bidding war.

STEVAN JOVETIC
Only six months into his Manchester City posting, the versatile Montenegrin has become something of a forgotten man and the word is the ex-Fiorentina star would jump at the chance to return to Italy.

SHINJI KAGAWA
Some 18 months after joining Manchester United, the attacking midfielder is yet to command a regular spot and, mindful of the forthcoming World Cup, he might be tempted to return to the Bundesliga.

EZEQUIEL LAVEZZI
The Argentinian forward has not quite lived up to expectations at Paris Saint-Germain following a move from Napoli and, if the right offer comes in, he could be shipped out to England or Italy.

JUAN MATA
Controversially benched by Chelsea boss Jose Mourinho this season, the Spanish playmaker may have to look elsewhere for technical area appreciation, with PSG's Laurent Blanc much more of a believer.

ALEXANDRE PATO
Keen to call time on a frustrating spell in his homeland with Corinthians, the Brazilian attacker is looking to return to the European mainstream, perhaps to old club Milan or rivals Internazionale.

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Fuel consumption figures for Juke range are: URBAN 28.8-58.9mpg (9.8-4.8L/100km), EXTRA URBAN 47.1-72.4mpg (6.0-3.9L/100km), COMBINED 38.2-67.3mpg (7.4-4.2L/100km), CO_2 emissions 169-109g/km.

MPG figures are obtained from laboratory testing, in accordance with 2004/3/EC and intended for comparisons between vehicles and may not reflect real driving results. (Optional equipment, maintenance, driving behaviour, road and weather conditions may affect the official results). *Only available on models equipped with 4WD 1.6 DIG-T. Model shown is a Juke n-tec 1.6 petrol priced at £16,295 On The Road with optional metallic paint at £500. Models subject to availability. Google™ Send-to-Car and Google™ Places require subscription, compatible phone or device (not included with vehicle), and Wi-Fi or 3G connection, and rely on services provided by third parties outside Nissan's control. Cellular networks not available in all areas. Voice minutes, roaming charges and/or data usage may apply. Nissan is not responsible for any equipment replacement or upgrades, or associated costs that may be required for continued operation due to service changes. Google™ wordmark and logos are registered trademarks owned by Google Inc. Information correct at the time of going to print. Nissan Motor (GB) Limited, The Rivers Office Park, Denham Way, Maple Cross, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire WD3 9YS.

301580/A2

"I can't lie. The atmosphere at this match makes our Super Bowl seem like a little league baseball game"

American film director Spike Lee does the right thing and falls in love with the emotion at the Brazilian Cup Final between Flamengo and Atletico Paranaense

15 MATCHES THAT MATTERED

Recent crunch games from around the globe

NIGERIA 3
MEXICO 0
The African side beat the Under-17 World Cup holders in the United Arab Emirates to win the tournament for a record-breaking fourth time.

GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE 1
SEOUL 1
A home draw for the Chinese club made it 3-3 on aggregate and earned Guangzhou Evergrande their first AFC Champions League title, on away goals.

AL AHLY 2
ORLANDO PIRATES 0
A 3-1 aggregate victory on home soil saw the Egyptian team win the CAF Champions League title for an unprecedented eighth time.

MANCHESTER UNITED 1
ARSENAL 0
Robin Van Persie headed the only goal against his former side as top-of-the-table Arsenal lost in the Premier League for only the second time this season.

JUVENTUS 3
NAPOLI 0
Fernando Llorente, Andrea Pirlo and Paul Pogba got on the score sheet as the defending champions closed the gap at the top of Serie A.

VITORIA 1
CRUZEIRO 3
The visitors clinched the Brazilian championship for a third time, wrapping up the league title with four games to spare.

SENEGAL 1
IVORY COAST 1
An injury-time equaliser from Salomon Kalou secured a World Cup berth for the Ivory Coast in a match played in Casablanca, Morocco.

FRANCE 3
UKRAINE 0
"*Les Bleus*" became the first European team to overturn a 2-0 first-leg play-off deficit in qualifying for the World Cup finals.

EVERTON 3
LIVERPOOL 3
A late Daniel Sturridge header salvaged a point for Liverpool in one of the most entertaining Merseyside derbies for years.

BORUSSIA DORTMUND 0
BAYERN MUNICH 3
Bayern's first win over Dortmund in seven Bundesliga meetings preserved their four-point lead, with goals from Mario Gotze, Arjen Robben and Thomas Muller.

CSKA MOSCOW 1
SPARTAK MOSCOW 0
Reigning champions CSKA came out on top in the Moscow derby. Seydou Doumbia scored the only goal after a mistake by Spartak goalkeeper Artyom Rebrov.

SPORTING KANSAS CITY 2
HOUSTON DYNAMO 1
Sporting Kansas City reached their first MLS Cup Final thanks to Dom Dwyer's 23rd-minute winner after the first leg in Texas had ended goalless.

FENERBAHCE 2
GALATASARAY 0
Fenerbahce maintained their good early-season form at the top of the Turkish league with a comfortable win in the Istanbul derby.

SWEDEN 2
PORTUGAL 3
The expected shoot-out between Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Cristiano Ronaldo did not disappoint. The Portuguese captain took the plaudits with a stunning hat-trick.

ATHLETIC BILBAO 1
BARCELONA 0
Gerardo Martino suffered his first La Liga defeat as Barcelona coach in a game that allowed Atletico Madrid to join his side at the top of La Liga.

Jim HOLDEN

AT THE HEART OF THE GAME

In years to come, will anybody care that Zlatan is a World Cup absentee?

Zlatan Ibrahimovic is a wonderful entertainer of modern football. His skills on the field can be a kaleidoscope of wizardry, while his conversation off it is mesmerising in its egotistical fervour.

So, even though his Sweden were beaten in a dramatic World Cup play-off by Portugal, and his two goals were trumped by a hat-trick from his eternal rival, Cristiano Ronaldo, there was still no holding back the self regard of the man.

"One thing is for sure, a World Cup without me is nothing to watch," said Ibrahimovic afterwards, as if a giant among pygmies spurned by the horrid hand of history.

Oh, the poor fellow. Did anyone have the nerve to tell him that magnificent talent doesn't always feature at great tournaments? George Best, Allan Simonsen and George Weah, for example, are all Ballon d'Or winners who never made it to the World Cup finals. Zlatan is not even a Ballon d'Or winner.

The superstar Swede, of course, had another merry answer to this fact a couple of weeks later. "I don't need the Ballon d'Or to know I'm the best," he said severely to TV reporters after his Paris Saint-Germain club beat Olympiakos in a routine Champions League group game.

Oh, the poor fellow. It is rotten luck that has delivered him into a football career at the same time as Ronaldo and Lionel Messi, who the rest of the world believes are two even more sublime talents. Yes, rotten luck. But we can't all be wrong, can we?

> Ibrahimovic's problem is not that his talent will be missing so much as his personality and ego

Of course, it's a pity that Zlatan will be missing from the carnival in Brazil next summer. He would have been an adornment. It was even more of a pity that Best never made it to this grand stage – and his absence did not make the 1966 or 1970 tournaments a worthless sporting event.

What did Best do? On the day of the 1966 Final he was at Wembley with his football pal Mike Summerbee watching the match anonymously among the fans, having been booked for speeding on the motorway in his white Jaguar car on the way down to London from Manchester.

The real problem for Ibrahimovic is not that his talent is missing from the tournament so much as his personality and ego.

Dominant characters demand to be where the action is. When old players talk of Ferenc Puskas, they remember not only his genius on the pitch but also the way he wanted to organise everyone in the after-match banquet. He was the maestro of the food as well as the football.

These men of natural arrogance can be a powerful force in the game. Diego Maradona was one, Puskas another, while Johan Cruyff also springs to mind as a character who had to impose his will on everything he touched.

Sometimes they succeed, and sometimes they don't. Puskas and Cruyff were both the greatest players of their time, and the most brilliant stars at their World Cup tournaments in 1954 and 1974. Neither man finished as winners in the Final.

The Zlatan way is not the only route to glory. There have been several World Cup-winning teams with modest superstars. Bobby Charlton was the hero of 1966, and there has rarely been a more charming champion than Andres Iniesta at the last tournament in 2010.

Ibrahimovic wasn't at that World Cup in South Africa four years ago. Does anyone remember his absence, or care?

Few will mind this time. The 2014 tournament has the potential to be the best World Cup for a generation; This time there is the prospect of four truly outstanding teams in hosts Brazil, near neighbours Argentina, reigning holders Spain and a resurgent Germany – all of them committed to attacking philosophy and entertaining football.

What will the sulking Swede be up to? My guess is that somewhere in the world Zlatan Ibrahimovic will be watching the progress of his contemporaries with a heavy heart but a very keen eye. And if a TV company can persuade him to be a pundit they will have a guaranteed ratings winner. WS

"I played many, many times for my country, but now I'm about to play the best game of my life"

Colombian midfield legend Carlos Valderrama announces his intention to stand for election to the nation's senate

REPORTS we couldn't make up

1 The drummer for the US rock band Red Hot Chili Peppers, Chad Smith, found himself in red-hot trouble with Flamengo fans after he was seen wiping his backside with the club's shirt.

Smith made his faux pas while attending a drum clinic in Belo Horizonte – which is home to Libertadores Cup winners Atletico Mineiro, before the band played a gig there.

Video of his actions went viral on the internet, and he apologised, saying: "My joke about team rivalries went too far."

When the Chili Peppers moved on to Rio for the next leg of their tour, Smith was on a peace mission with Flamengo supporters and posted a picture of himself signing autographs in the club's famous red-and-black hooped shirt.

On a roll...Smith in action (top) and with Flamengo fans

Bloody problem...Bender

2 Borussia Dortmund's Sven Bender, playing against Napoli in the Champions League, encountered a bloody problem when filling in as a makeshift centre-half.

The 24-year-old was treated several times for a badly broken nose and had cotton-wool plugs put in his nostrils. But every time the plugs popped out, his yellow shirt became splattered in blood.

With the rules prohibiting players from playing with blood on their kit, the Germany international was forced to change his shirt four times during the game. The club, however, only had three spare shirts for him, so after the third change the kit man had to go to the club shop at the Westfalenstadion and purchase another shirt to enable Bender to complete the 90 minutes.

3 Television viewers in France were treated to a weather forecast with a difference following their country's dramatic World Cup play-off comeback against Ukraine.

Doria Tillier, a weather girl for Canal+, promised after the first leg, which France had lost 2-0, that if Didier Deschamps' team overturned the loss in Kiev and won the return in Paris, she would present the following day's weather forecast naked.

Call my buff...Tillier

True to her word, she did her weather report while being filmed running across fields and meadows with nothing but a pair of boots on. However, due to the high camera angle and the French broadcasting watershed, viewers were unable to appreciate if there was a cold front coming their way.

No laughing matter...Piturca is mocked up as Mr Bean

4 Reports from Romania suggest that Adrian Mutu has been banned for life from representing the national side again after he posted a photo-shopped image of the coach, Victor Piturca, looking like the comedy character Mr Bean.

Mutu, who has previously been in trouble for GBH and cocaine use, claims it was meant as a joke to lighten the mood following Romania's exit from the World Cup play-offs to Greece.

The Ajaccio forward who has played 77 times for his country, posted the image on Facebook.

5 A Cypriot museum owner, who has amassed more than 21,000 individual pieces of memorabilia dedicated to UEFA president Michel Platini, is bidding to get into the *Guinness World Records* book.

Philippos Stavrou-Platini, who has legally changed his surname, runs The Temple of Michel Platini in Mosfiloti, a small village south of Nicosia.

The museum, which doubles as a taverna in the evenings, is hoping to get an entry for "the largest sporting memorabilia collection".

The collection includes the official UEFA suit that Platini wore to functions, plus various football shirts, balls, a Platini candle and even a cup that the Frenchman once sipped tea from.

Adoration...The Temple of Michel Platini Mosfiloti in Cyprus

OBITUARIES

AMEDEO AMADEI (1921-2014)
The former Roma and Italy striker was the youngest-ever player and goalscorer in Serie A history. He made his league debut in May 1937 at the age of 15 years and nine months, and he scored his first goal a week later. He later played for Internazionale and Napoli, and won 13 caps for his country.

BILL FOULKES (1932-2014)
A survivor of the 1958 Munich air disaster, he played 688 games for Manchester United – making him fourth in the club's all-time appearance list – and won four First Division titles, an FA Cup and was part of the European Cup-winning side in 1968.

Loyal servant...Foulkes

QUSAI EMAD AL KHAWALDA (1994-2013)
The 19-year-old, who played for Al Faisaly's under-20 side in Jordan, died during a game against Al Jazeera when he swallowed his tongue.

PEDRO ROCHA (1942-2013)
The only Uruguayan to have appeared in four World Cup tournaments, between 1962 and 1974, he played his club football mainly for Penarol, where he won eight Uruguayan titles and three Libertadores Cups. He moved to Sao Paulo in the early 1970's and helped them win their first-ever Brazilian championship in 1977.

Uruguayan wall...Rocha (left) at the 1974 World Cup

CAYETANO RE (1938-2014)
Paraguayan striker who played for his country at the 1958 World Cup and took them to the 1986 tournament as coach. Spent four seasons in Spain with Barcelona, where he was La Liga's top scorer in the 1964-1965 season.

Paul GARDNER

THE WORLDWIDE VIEW

World Cup balls and sin bins: bad ideas never go away, they just get recycled

Two slices of absurdity that keep cropping up in the football world have just cropped up again. I shall right now destroy them with withering logic, secure in the knowledge that they will crop up again anyway.

First, something that now accompanies all major tournaments: the introduction of a new ball. This always starts with an explosion of pseudo-technical hogwash from the manufacturers. So here comes the official Adidas ball for the 2014 World Cup, the Brazuca, replacing the Jabulani, which was the version cooked up for the 2010 World Cup.

The Jabulani was criticized by goalkeepers who said it did strange things in the air. This would make their job virtually impossible, it seemed. This nonsense even made its way into the official FIFA Technical Report, which talked of "inexplicable" goalkeeper errors and suggested that the ball might have been partly responsible.

The only thing worth knowing about all this is that, in South Africa, complete with its goalkeeper-killing Jabulani, the average number of goals-per-game sank to 2.26 – the second lowest in the history of the tournament.

The new Brazuca has six interlocking panels, it's thermally bonded, it will fly straighter, and who knows what else. And, yes, I do quite definitely feel that I've heard all this before. Several times. We're told that the Brazuca designers wanted to reduce the ball's weight, which is odd when one recalls that one of the criticisms of the Jabulani was that it was too light.

Anyway, what weight? I've studied plenty of these breathless new-ball announcements and I don't recall one of them that specifies a weight for its new wonderball. Nor is there ever any discussion of the FIFA specifications: the ball must weigh between 14 and 16 ounces.

The Brazuca is now being made available to the World Cup teams, so we shall soon hear from the goalkeepers, I fear.

For our second absurdity we can thank Michel Platini, who is now suddenly enamoured with the sin bin, apparently to replace yellow cards. Part of his reasoning – the only part that makes any sense – is that sending an offender off the field for a limited time (Platini suggests 10 or 15 minutes) works to the immediate advantage of the opposing team. If it works at all, that is.

> The Brazuca is now being made available to the World Cup teams, so we shall soon hear from the goalkeepers, I fear

"It is an idea," says Platini, "Now it needs to mature and see if it really is good for the game. It is a proposal to be explored."

Not much exploring need be done here. This is a totally rotten idea. I shall refer Platini to what I wrote, in this column, in 2004: "If there's one thing that football does not need it's a rule change that further encourages coaches to play defensively. Yet that's exactly what compelling a team to play short-handed must do."

Nothing has changed since then. Playing ultra-defensively is still likely to be the coaching answer to having a player binned. Ten minutes of negative play and plenty of time-wasting, with the certainty that subtle new tricks will be introduced. And then, when the 10 minutes of negativity is up, and his team has survived – and we know that is the probable outcome because we know the way that modern soccer is played – back on to the field trots a nicely rested player.

For football, the sin bin idea is one that belongs in the trash bin.

"He was once very keen to sign me. What he said annoyed and disappointed me"

Irritated by the assertion of Gerard Houllier that he is not in the Lionel Messi/Cristiano Ronaldo class, Franck Ribery seeks out the former Liverpool and Lyon boss for a blazing row

PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

IN

In charge... Meulensteen

EUROPE

RENE MEULENSTEEN replaced Martin Jol as manager of Fulham, while fellow Premier League strugglers Crystal Palace appointed **TONY PULIS** – who parted company with Stoke City at the end of last season – as successor to Ian Holloway

SINISA MIHAJLOVIC stepped down as coach of Serbia to take charge of Sampdoria, who sacked Delio Rossi after three successive defeats. **EUGENIO CORINI,** who left Chievo in May, returned to replace Giuseppe Sannino with the club bottom of Serie A.

Samp saviour...Mihajlovic

BOSKO DJUROVSKI is set to become coach of Macedonia on January 1, while **PAVEL VRBA** will quit as boss of Viktoria Plzen at the end of their Champions League campaign in December and take charge of the Czech Republic.

JUAN CARLOS GARRIDO, who was sacked by Club Brugge in September, replaced Pepe Mel as coach of Real Betis with the club bottom of La Liga.

ROLLAND COURBIS returned to coach struggling Ligue 1 side Montpellier for a second time after Jean Fernandez resigned.

Hibs head man...Butcher

Former England captain **TERRY BUTCHER** left Inverness Caledonian Thistle to replace Pat Fenlon as manager of Scottish Premier League rivals Hibernian. **JOHN HUGHES** replaced Butcher at Inverness.

LARS LAGERBACK, who led Iceland to the World Cup play-off, signed a two-year contract extension. He will be succeeded by his assistant, **HEIMIR HALLGRIMSSON**, for the 2018 World Cup qualifying campaign.

Former Sweden striker **HENRIK LARSSON** was appointed coach of Falkenberg, who have been promoted to the Allsvenskan.

Borussia Dortmund signed former Germany defender **MANUEL FRIEDRICH** – who had been without a club since leaving Bayer Leverkusen in the summer – until the end of the season.

Former France full-back **ANTHONY REVEILLERE**, who had been a free agent since the summer, joined Napoli until the end of the season.

Romania's joint top international goalscorer **ADRIAN MUTU** will return to his homeland in the January transfer window and join Petrolul Ploiesti from Ligue 1 side Ajaccio. "Everything is agreed," said the 34-year-old. "I'll play for Petrolul for one and a half years."

Iceland Under-21 striker **HOLMBERT ARON FRIDJONSSON** signed a pre-contract to Scottish Premier League leaders Celtic from Fram in the January transfer window.

Former Croatia left-back **ROBERT JARNI** took over as coach of Bosnian side Sarajevo after Husref Musemic stepped down for health reasons.

A World Cup winner with Italy in 2006, **GIANLUCA ZAMBROTTA** took up his first managerial role, as player-coach of Swiss second-tier side Chiasso.

RODDY COLLINS, who guided Athlone Town to the second-tier title last season, became manager of League of Ireland side Derry City.

CHRIS HUGHES replaced Bernard McNally as manager of Welsh Premier League side Newtown.

Back to Brazil...Conca

SOUTH AMERICA

Argentinian midfielder **DARIO CONCA**, who helped China's Guangzhou Evergrande to win the AFC Champions League, will rejoin Brazilian club Fluminense after the Club World Cup.

RICARDO RODRIGUEZ replaced Julio Cesar Falcioni as coach of struggling Argentinian side All Boys.

CONCACAF

CESAR FARIAS resigned as coach of Venezuela to replace Jorge Almiron at Tijuana. **JOSE LUIS REAL** was reappointed coach of Mexican side Guadalajara, replacing Juan Carlos Ortega.

Argentinian coach **HECTOR VARGAS** left Victoria to take charge of another Honduran side, Olimpia.

AFRICA

Ismaily's **SHAWKY GHARIB** quit the Egyptian club to replace Bob Bradley as coach of the national team.

Frenchman **CLAUDE LEROY,** who was in charge of DR Congo at the 2013 Africn Nations Cup, took over as coach of neighbouring Congo, succeeding fellow countryman Kamel Djabour.

ASIA

Former China coach **GAO HONGBO** replaced Dragomir Okuka as boss of club side Jiangsu Sainty.

Central Coast Mariners coach **GRAHAM ARNOLD** joined J-League side Vegalta Sendai. He was replaced at the Australian club by former assistant **PHIL MOSS**.

"If the Dutch federation calls him to meet up for a coffee, things could move on very quickly. Guus is waiting"

Cees Van Nieuwenhuizen, the agent of Guus Hiddink, tells Algemeen Dagblad that his client is keen for a second spell in charge of the "Oranje"

Appointments, sackings and loans

EUROPE

Iceland's **EIDUR GUDJOHNSEN** quit international football after the loss to Croatia in the World Cup play-offs. The 35-year-old forward, who plays for Club Brugge in Belgium, is his country's all-time record scorer with 24 goals and is fourth in the appearances list with 78 caps.

Estonia decided against renewing the contract of coach **TARMO RUUTLI.**

Malmo boss **RIKARD NORLING** resigned after leading the club to their 17th Swedish title.

Dutch coach **RICARDO MONIZ** was sacked by Ferencvaros after they slid from second to seventh in the Hungarian league table, 12 points behind leaders Debrecen.

RUNE SKARSFJORD parted company with Brann after three years as coach of the Norwegian club.

Former Czech Republic captain **TOMAS UJFALUSI** announced his retirement due to a long-standing knee injury. The 35-year-old defender joined Sparta Prague at the start of this season but failed to make a league appearance.

Less than 24 hours after dropping to the bottom of the Isreali Premier League, **DROR KASHTAN** resigned as the coach of Bnei Yehuda.

SOUTH AMERICA

Brazil's Fluminense sacked **VANDERLEI LUXEMBURGO** after a 1-0 defeat in the league by Corinthians.

Record MLS appearances...Hartman has finally hung up his gloves

TITE, who led Corinthians to Libertadores and Club World Cup success in 2012, left the club at the end of the Brazilian season.

Parted company...Tite

CONCACAF

New England Revolution striker **JUAN AGUDELO**'s move to Stoke City fell through after the Premier League side were denied a work permit. The 20-year-old, who signed a pre-contract agreement in August and was expected to move to England in January, has 17 caps for the USA but he was not included in Jurgen Klinsmann's squad for November's friendlies against Scotland and Austria.

Former Los Angeles Galaxy keeper **KEVIN HARTMAN** retired after making an MLS record 416 appearances.

New York Red Bulls released former USA defender **HEATH PEARCE,** who won the last of his 35 caps in 2012.

GUILLERMO VAZQUEZ, who led Cruz Azul to the 2013 Mexican Cup Final, stepped down as coach by "mutual agreement".

AFRICA

Dutch coach **RUUD KROL** parted company with Tunisia's CS Sfaxien the day after he led them to victory in the CAF Confederation Cup Final.

ASIA

After eight years as coach of New Zealand, **RICKI HERBERT** stepped down following the team's loss to Mexico in the World Cup play-offs.

Former Argentina striker **LUCIANO FIGUEROA** joined Malaysian Super League side Johor Darul Takzim from Panathinaikos of Greece.

OUT

Leaving on a high...Krol

OM part company with Baup

Marseille sacked coach **ELIE BAUP** and appointed sports director Jose Anigo on a caretaker basis.

"It was my hardest decision as club president," said Vincent Labrune.

Baup took the club to second in Ligue 1 last term, but a 1-0 loss at home to Nantes in early December left OM 13 points adrift of arch-rivals and league leaders Paris Saint-Germain. They had also failed to pick up any points in the Champions League after five games of the group stage.

In a previous spell in charge of the club, Anigo, 52, led Marseille to the UEFA Cup Final, in 2004.

Not long now...Baup during the game against Nantes

Brian GLANVILLE

THE VOICE OF FOOTBALL

Mind games are best left on the shrink's couch

The news that the Football Association subjected – this is surely the word – a group of 10-year-old players at the new headquarters at St George's Park to an address by a psychologist elicited disbelief.

It seems to me bad enough that clubs now, Southampton among them, are fielding teams of boys under 11 and even under 10. I mention Southampton because I always remember one of the club's most revered figures Ted Bates – at various times, player, manager and chairman, with a statue erected to him outside the stadium – telling me once on the way into a match at the old Dell: "They learn to win before they can play." And play is the operative word.

Small children, we have often been told by experts, should be given free rein to play, rather than be dressed up in pro club colours and sent out to operate in specific formations.

Yes, every now and then you will find a precocious talent, such as Jack Wilshere, who joined Luton Town as a nine-year-old and was then snapped up by Arsenal, but that was the exception that proved the rule. Meanwhile, how could a psychologist tell a group of young children anything which could possibly help, rather than confuse them?

I am the last person to denigrate or dismiss the merits of psychotherapy, as an admirer of Freud, though not of Jung, with his praise for Marxism in its earlier days. Yet it was not long ago that a questionnaire by the then Arsenal psychologist was leaked, to the ridicule of Ray Parlour, their energetic midfielder. The questions put to the players were of stupendous banality and irrelevance.

My mind goes back to 1958, the World Cup in Sweden, and the psychologist brought to the tournament by Brazil; the idea presumably being that he could help to avoid any repetition of the 1954 World Cup "Battle of Berne" when, losing to Hungary, the team ran riot. Two were sent off by the English referee Arthur Ellis, who also dismissed one Hungarian. It was suggested the Brazil players came from uneducated and undisciplined backgrounds.

> "Senhor Feola is not saying he wishes the psychologist would go to hell...but he is thinking it"
>
> An interpreter relays the Brazil manager's response before the 1958 World Cup Final

I interviewed the psychologist in Gothenburg. He was a small, bespectacled man, unshaven and wearing a grey jersey. He did not like to address players in groups, he told me, nor individually, since this could exacerbate their problems. Instead, he got them to draw the figures of footballers. The more sophisticated did so in detail, those less intelligent drew matchstick men. The two categories made good wing partnerships.

Notably and astoundingly, he strongly advised against either Garrincha, too undisciplined, and the 17-year-old Pele, too immature, being selected. As we know, when both came into the team for the third qualifying match against the Soviet Union they tore them apart.

The astonishing Pele ended with six goals, two in the Final. Garrincha, with his jaguar swerve and bursts on the right wing, set up Brazil's first two goals in the Final. No psychologist could ever have got near this extraordinary child of nature; father of seven daughters, he was just as happy to play in a pick-up game in his village of Pau Grande as to turn out for Botafogo. He would be still more superbly effective in the 1962 finals.

Just before the 1958 Final, the manager of Brazil, Vicente Feola, was asked what he thought of the psychologist. The interpreter replied: "Senhor Feola is not saying he wishes the psychologist would go to hell...but he is thinking it."

Matter over mind...the teenage Pele (centre) would not have been a 1958 World Cup winner had Brazil heeded their psychologist

Moving on...Coppell has left his post as Crawley Town's director of football

Credit to Coppell, the manager England missed out on

Amid what might be called a managerial maelstrom, which saw the departure in almost simultaneous conjunction of Martin Jol at Fulham, Owen Coyle at Bolton Wanderers, Dave Jones at Sheffield Wednesday and David Flitcroft at Barnsley, Steve Coppell's demise at humble Crawley Town made barely a footnote.

He had not been their manager but director of football since April 2012, in as humble a context as League One. In not so distant years he had worked small wonders at Reading, raising them into the Premier League. He had done well at Brighton & Hove Albion, fuming at the way they had been levered out of their Goldstone Ground and exiled to a glorified peripheral athletics track.

Coppell's one major hiccup was at Manchester City where, hot on the heels of an evening defeat at Reading, he suddenly and mysteriously resigned.

In his bright days at Reading, I thought he should be a candidate for the England managership. He would surely have made a better job of things than Steve McClaren, who is now redeeming himself at Derby County. But it didn't happen and in due course he left Reading, resurfaced briefly at Bristol City and ultimately found his way down the scale to Crawley.

Coppell had been an outstanding and indefatigable right-winger. A Liverpudlian, he somehow eluded both the great Merseyside clubs, crossing the river to play for humble Tranmere Rovers while, rare among pros, gaining a degree in economics from Liverpool University. Manchester United then signed him and he would become a salient England player.

Not to be forgotten was his prodigious throw-in from the right which gave the brave Bryan Robson that crucial early World Cup goal against France in Bilbao in 1982.

Villas-Boas will have to learn the hard way

"*Qui s'excuse accuse*," as the French say. Who excuses himself, accuses himself. Words that might be borne in mind by Tottenham Hotspur manager Andre Villas-Boas, who spoke out bitterly against his critics after his team had been swamped and humiliated 6-0 by Manchester City.

The inevitable response was highly negative. Yet, next time out, Tottenham acquitted themselves impressively when drawing 2-2 at home with Manchester United. That should have been Villas-Boas' answer, but he had queered his own pitch.

History lesson for Pulis

Tony Pulis has made a promising start in charge of Crystal Palace, unlucky to lose at Norwich City, resourceful victors against West Ham United at Selhurst Park. Credit, though, should be given to Keith Millen, the stand-in manager, who brought Palace back from the shadows, putting a disastrous 4-1 collapse at home to Fulham behind them.

Fortunately, Pulis has a better grasp of football than he has of history. Sacked by Stoke City, he spent some time in the Crimea, where he said: "I went to the palace where Winston Churchill, Theodore Roosevelt and Joseph Stalin cut the world up after World War Two."

Has Theodore Roosevelt risen from the nether regions? The president who called his office a "bully pulpit" and who suggested, "speak softly but carry a big stick" was, of course, an ancestor of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who attended the famous or notorious conference at Yalta. He showed ludicrous respect for Stalin and a foolish disdain for Churchill, which did him no credit and future Europe no good.

Meanwhile, one assumes that Pulis will not be putting Johnny Byrne on his team sheets...

Name game... Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin at the Yalta conference in 1945

Have Fulham gambled on Jol's pal Meulensteen?

Martin Jol could scarcely have missed the writing on the wall when his fellow Dutchman, and presumed friend, Rene Meulensteen was appointed coach and promptly emitted a statement, curiously under reported in the football press, that the Fulham players were seriously unfit. Since Jol sat in the driver's seat, who else, if this were embarrassingly true, could be held culpable?

As the Sicilian bandit Salvatore Giuliano was want to say: "God protect me from my friends."

Had Mohamed Al Fayed still been in charge at Fulham one imagines Jol would have gone much earlier in the team's recent disastrous run, but it was probably difficult for such as new owner Shahid Khan to act quickly with such a draconian decision.

The word is that Fulham have abundant so far unused talent in their under-21 team which Jol ignored. The word is also that Meulensteen, who coached successfully for years at Manchester United, is essentially a coach rather than a manager. We shall see. **WS**

● Read Brian Glanville's exclusive online column at worldsoccer.com

See no evil...but Jol's days at Fulham were numbered

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Ronaldinho's farewell tour

The Club World Cup will feature some of football's biggest names – possibly for the last time on the global stage – but it is still struggling for credibility. By John Holmesdale

The Club World Cup, FIFA's annual attempt to anoint the global club champions, is heading to Africa; to Morocco, to be more precise. And although Mohamed Aboutrika is hoping to end his career on a high, the headline acts are still expected to be from Europe and South America.

Despite the globalisation of football over the past two decades, the Club World Cup – and its predecessor the World Club Championship – has always been dominated by European and South American teams.

Only once has a team from outside of Europe or South America made the Final: in 2010 when TP Mazembe of DR Congo surprisingly beat Internacional of Brazil in the semi-final.

Aboutrika (see *People of the Year*, page 62) starred for Al Ahly at the 2012 tournament, where they narrowly lost to eventual winners Corinthians in the semi-final. And assuming Al Ahly can overcome Asian champions Guangzhou Evergrande in their quarter-final, his last match as a professional will be either the Club World Cup Final on December 21 or the third-place play-off that will precede the main event.

European champions Bayern Munich and Atletico Mineiro, the South American champions, are overwhelming favourites to contest the Final. Atletico have lost Bernard, one of the stars of their victorious Libertadores Cup campaign, who was sold to Shakhtar Donetsk last summer, but they hope to have their biggest star fit and ready to travel to Morocco.

Former World Player of the Year Ronaldinho, now 33, says he is winning the battle to be fit, having injured a thigh muscle at the end of September.

"The recovery is good," he said when interviewed at the World Cup draw. "I am no longer feeling pain and I am already doing some training activities.

"I am very happy. I am preparing to play in the Club World Cup."

Like Aboutrika, the Club World Cup could be his last tournament on the global stage. The form of Oscar for the national side, coupled with Kaka's revival at Milan, has pushed Ronaldinho down the *Selecao* pecking order.

Bayern will face the winner of the quarter-final between Al Ahly and Guangzhou, while Atletico Mineiro will most likely face Monterrey, who must see off the winner of the opening match between Oceania champions Auckland City and the reigning Moroccan champions Raja Casablanca.

Morocco 2013...the main event

> "I no longer feel pain...I am preparing to play at the Club World Cup"
> Ronaldinho prior to the tournament

Taken more seriously

The competition has always been taken more seriously by the South Americans. This is partly because of their calendar – their sides plan their season to peak in December, while Europeans see the Club World Cup as an intrusion into their league schedule – and partly because it has been seen as a chance to give the Europeans a bloody nose.

But Bayern claim they are taking it seriously, even though they are without Arjen Robben, one of the heroes of last May's Champions League Final, who is injured. The European champions will miss games in the Bundesliga campaign on the weekends of December 14-15 and December 21-22 as they compete in Morocco.

Despite their dominance of the Bundesliga, Bayern have global ambitions to expand their appeal around the world.

They announced recently that they will again travel to Qatar for the January winter break. The first-team squad will train at the Aspire academy and they will play a number of exhibition matches during their stay.

Ironically, Bayern refused to take part in the World Club Cup in the 1970s, when the annual encounter with the South American club champions was played over two legs, home and away.

The competition, in a number of different guises, has had a chequered history. The idea of an intercontinental challenge was first raised by UEFA general secretary Henri Delaunay in the mid-1950s in a letter to his counterparts at CONMEBOL, the South American federation. His idea provided the impetus for the South Americans to set up the Libertadores Cup, a direct copy of the European Champions Cup, to find the South American club champions to represent the continent in the new inter-continental contest.

The first such World Club Cup – also known as Intercontinental Club Cup and Europe/South America Cup – took place in 1960 between Real Madrid and Penarol of Uruguay. The first leg, which ended goalless, was played at Montevideo's Centenario Stadium, the venue for the first World Cup Final of 1930. In the return in Madrid, Ferenc Puskas and Alfredo Di Stefano led a 5-1 destruction of the Uruguayans.

Pele's Santos became the first side to retain the trophy, when they won back-to-back titles in 1962 and 1963. Santos were already the unofficial world champions but victories over Benfica and Milan (in front of large crowds at the ▸

Signing off...the 2013 Club World Cup is likely to be the last time Ronaldinho will be seen in a major international tournament

Maracana stadium in Rio De Janeiro) helped to establish South America's relish for the competition.

However, the manner of the Santos successes was to provide a taste of things to come. The 1963 Final needed a replay at the Maracana, where the 165,000 crowd booed Milan. Both teams became frustrated at the lack of openings and tempers frayed. In the 34rd minute, Milan skipper Cesare Maldini flattened Almir, deputising for the injured Pele, and was sent off. Just before half-time, Almir kicked Milan goalkeeper Luigi Balzaretti, who was carried off and required stitches to his head and hand. Then Santos' Ismael attacked Milan forward Amarildo and was also sent off.

A pattern of "anti-matches" was established, particularly following the meetings of Internazionale and Argentina's Independiente in 1964 and 1965. The two teams were known in their respective countries for their ruthless, defensive approach.

Bad-tempered finals

So after a promising start, the Club World Cup had, by the late 1960s, deteriorated into a competition where bad-tempered finals became the norm. Bad behaviour and clashes of footballing style dominated the matches. In 1967, Celtic goalkeeper Ronnie Simpson was struck by a missile thrown by the crowd ahead of the match against Racing Club of Argentina in Buenos Aires. Celtic had won the first leg in Glasgow 1-0, but lost the return 2-1, forcing a play-off in Montevideo, where Paraguayan referee Rodolfo Orsorio sent off six players, including Celtic's Bertie Auld, who refused to leave the pitch.

It was therefore highly unfortunate, given this background, that Estudiantes

Attack...Celtic's Simpson was struck by a missile

de la Plata of Argentina would represent South America for the next three years.

Estudiantes were recognised as the most unpleasant side to emerge from South America. Against Manchester United in 1968, their tactics were widely condemned, and prompted FIFA president Stanley Rous to write a letter of complaint to the Estudiantes hierarchy.

Milan came off even worse a year later. Milan's Nestor Combin suffered a broken nose after being elbowed by Aguirre Suarez, one of Estudiantes' notorious hatchet men, while their goalkeeper Alberto Poletti committed an awful foul on Milan winger Pierino Prati, kicking him as he lay injured awaiting treatment.

Estudiantes behaved just as badly in 1970 when facing Feyenoord. Joop Van Daele, the Dutch side's bespectacled defender, had his glasses smashed early in the game, but still

COMPETING CLUBS/ REPRESENTATIVE NATION

Number of times competed ●●●

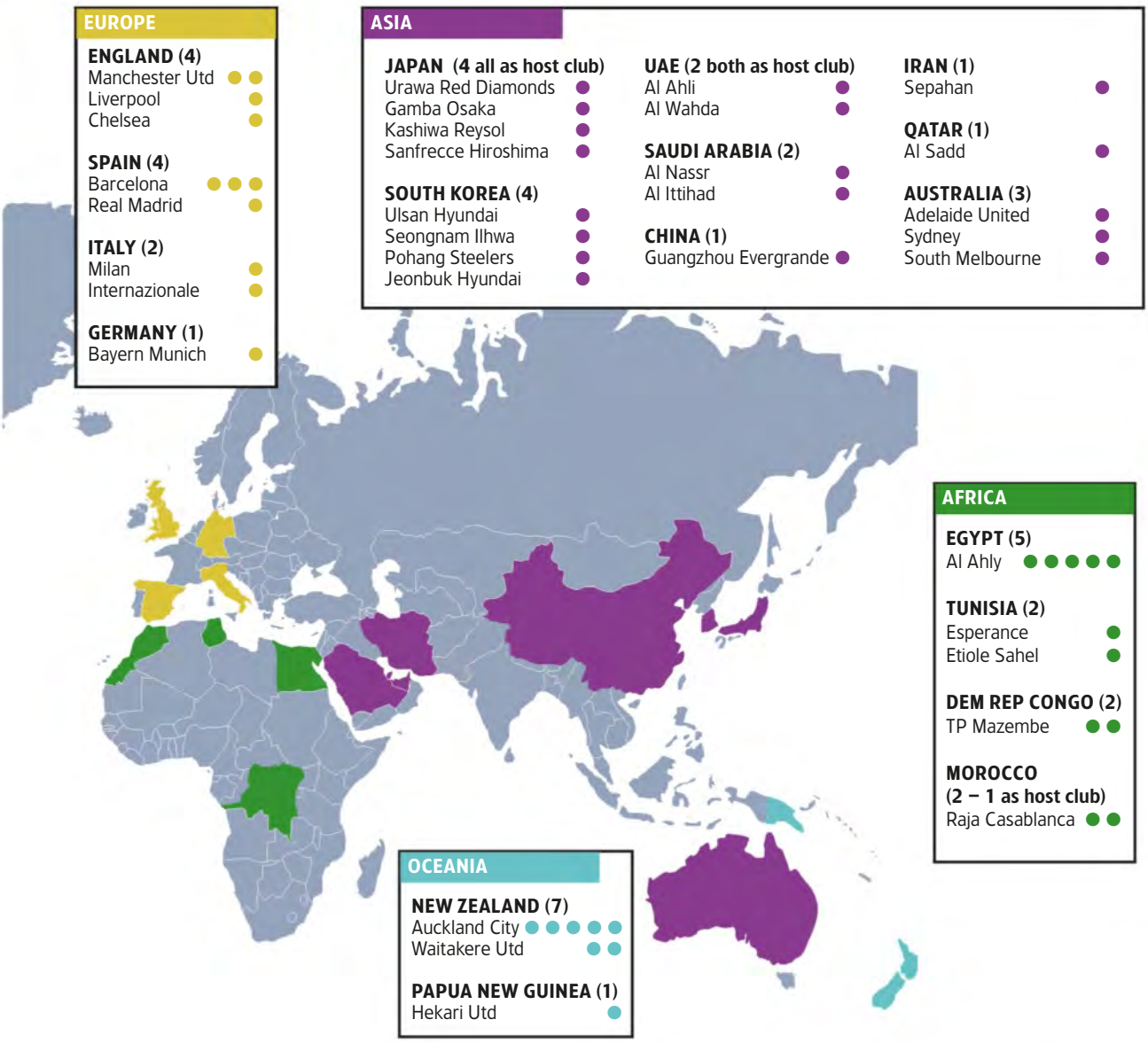
Challenge...Milan's Florin Raducioiu takes on Sao Paulo of Brazil in the 1993 Intercontinental Cup game in Japan

managed to score the winner.

European sides Ajax, Bayern, Liverpool and Nottingham Forest refused to take part in subsequent competitions and it was Japan who came to the rescue, opting to host an annual showpiece match from 1980 with the support of sponsors Toyota.

The competition gradually regained its credibility with European clubs until reaching its peak in the early 1990s. In 1993, Milan – who were seen by many in Europe as one of the best ever sides – faced Tele Santana's Sao Paulo. The Brazilians came out on top, helping to confirm South American dominance in the competition which was only broken when Ajax beat Gremio, coached by Luiz Felipe Scolari, on penalties in 1995.

In 1997, Cruzeiro were beaten by Borussia Dortmund but not before attracting controversy for borrowing three players – including 1994 World Cup-winning forward Bebeto – just



for the match in Tokyo.

The loan of Bebeto and fellow Brazilians Donizete and Goncalves was a sign of just how desperate the South Americans had become in their determination to win the intercontinental prize. Cruzeiro were able to get away with such a mercenary move because no single authority was in charge of the World Club Cup. The Japanese FA organised the match, with the co-operation of UEFA and CONMEBOL, but FIFA were not involved.

Change is afoot

While Cruzeiro's actions in 1997 were not a catalyst, change was afoot. FIFA, perhaps in view of UEFA's success with the TV-backed expansion of the Champions League, wanted a slice of the action. In 2000, they launched the inaugural World Club Championship. Brazil played host to the first tournament in January 2000, when European champions Manchester United were joined by Libertadores Cup winners Vasco da Gama, club champions from Asia, Africa, CONCACAF and Oceania, as well as Corinthians, the reigning Brazilian league champions.

United skipped the FA Cup third round to play in Brazil, encouraged by the Football Association, who thought participating in FIFA's new baby would help garner support for their 2006 World Cup bid.

Corinthians were the winners, beating Vasco da Gama on penalties, but a repeat of the competition was scuppered by the financial crisis that engulfed FIFA in 2001 when marketing company ISL collapsed.

Meanwhile, the World Club Cup limped on until 2004, supported by Toyota. However, in 2005, FIFA's competition returned, now called the Club World Championship, and soon to become known as the Club World Cup.

After four years in Yokohama, the 2009 and 2010 editions were held in Abu Dubai. After two years back in Yokohama, the tournament has now moved on to Morocco, where the 2014 event will also be held and where the African Nations Cup will be held in 2015.

India recently announced its intention to bid to host the 2015 and 2016 editions. FIFA are determined to take the Club World Cup to the rest of the world. But whether the world is interested remains to be seen. **WS**

● Following successful trials at the 2013 Under-20 World Cup and 2013 Under-17 World Cup, vanishing spray will be used by Club World Cup referees to mark the 10-yard distance for the defending team at a free-kick.

Full marks...vanishing spray will be used at the 2013 tournament

THE TEAMS

Al Ahly

African champions who overcame enormous problems in domestic football to beat Orlando Pirates of South Africa in the CAF Champions League Final and win a record eighth continental title.

Key man

Mohamed Aboutrika

Arguably the best African footballer never to play in Europe, he retires after the Club World Cup.

Coach

Mohamed Youssef

Former Egypt international who took over in 2013, having previously been assistant coach.

Promoted...Youssef took over last year

Atletico Mineiro

American champions for the first time in their history after beating Olimpia of Paraguay in the 2013 Libertadores Cup Final.

Key man

Ronaldinho

The former World Player of the Year faces a battle to be fit for the Club World Cup.

Coach

Cuca

Has a reputation for playing attacking football and has been in charge since 2011.

Win...Auckland City celebrate beating Waitakere United in the OFC Champions League Final

Auckland City

Oceania champions and part-timers who were founded less than 10 years ago. They will be taking part in their fifth Club World Cup but have only won one of seven previous matches at the tournament.

Key man

Ivan Vicelich

Veteran captain and New Zealand international who is back in Auckland after spells in Holland and China.

Coach

Ramon Tribulietx

Spanish-born coach who has been in charge since 2010.

Bayern Munich

European champions and Germany's most successful club.

Key man

Franck Ribery

France international who was outstanding in Bayern's run to the Champions League Final, particularly in the semi-final victories over Barcelona.

Coach

Pep Guardiola

Spaniard who took charge of Bayern at the start of this season, ending a "sabbatical" spent in New York following his departure from Barcelona in summer 2012.

Bayern star...Ribery

Guangzhou Evergrande

Asian club champions for the first time after their victory over Seoul in November. Heavily backed by real-estate company Evergrande.

Key man

Dario Conca

Argentinian attacking midfielder who has been the outstanding performer in Guangzhou's recent success but will return to Brazil's Fluminense after the Club World Cup in Morocco.

Outstanding...Conca

Coach

Marcello Lippi

The veteran Italian boss is the only man to have won continental club titles in Europe and Asia.

Monterrey

CONCACAF's leading team, having won the last three CONCACAF Champions League titles. In May, they beat fellow Mexican side Santos Laguna in the Final for the second year running.

Experience...Suazo

Key man

Humberto Suazo

Experienced Chilean international striker who has a career strike rate of more than a goal every other game.

Coach

Jose Guadalupe Cruz

Replaced Victor Manuel Vucetich, who was surprisingly sacked in August despite overseeing the club's recent successes. Cruz led Atlante at the 2009 Club World Cup.

Raja Casablanca

The reigning Moroccan league champions will represent the hosts.

Key man

Abdelmajid Jilani

The main striker in the absence of Hamza Abourazzouk, who is currently serving a six-month ban after failing a doping test.

Coach

Faouzi Benzarti

Tunisian who was hired in place of Mohamed Fakhir, who was fired two week before the Club World Cup following a run of poor results.

New boss...Benzarti

Libertadores champs...Leonardo Silva (left) celebrates with his Atletico Mineiro team-mates

Dispatches

Exclusive reports from our worldwide network of correspondents

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Sporting Kansas City beat Real Salt Lake on penalties to win the 2013 MLS Cup.

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Champions League winners Guangzhou Evergrande are the rising power in Asia.

PAUL GARDNER
in New York

Kansas City strike gold

The 2013 MLS Cup Final was one of the league's great successes

Sporting Kansas City are the new MLS champions, taking the title on penalties following a 1-1 draw with Real Salt Lake after extra time. It was hardly the prettiest of games, but the weather didn't help matters, with the temperature around minus seven degrees Celsius. Nor did a total of 40 fouls, which reflected a gritty battle with few scoring opportunities.

RSL scored first, seven minutes into the second half, when their Costa Rica forward Alvaro Saborio fired home, converting a pass from captain Kyle Beckerman. That looked to have settled matters, with RSL firmly in command and on 62 minutes they almost doubled their lead, but Beckerman's long-range shot hit the post. Ten minutes later, a chip from RSL's Javier Morales caught keeper Jimmy Nielsen out of position but his effort hit the base of the far post and rebounded back along the goal line.

Having survived those two close calls, KC were level three minutes later when French defender Aurelien Collin went forward for a corner and thumped home a header. After that brief spell of excitement, the pattern of scoreless endeavour resumed and the game went to spot-kicks.

KC went first in the shoot-out and had the advantage when Saborio skied RSL's first penalty over the bar and Nielsen then saved Ned Grabavoy's effort. But misses by KC's Graham Zusi and Matt Besler levelled the scores.

Ultimately, it came down to the 20th kick; a powerful drive by RSL substitute Lovel Palmer that came back off the crossbar to give Kansas City victory.

All square...central defender Collin (no78) puts Kansas level in the Final

The 2013 title was KC's second, after a victory in 2000 when they were known as Kansas City Wizards. Since then the franchise has undergone radical change. Kansas were one of the original cities with a team when MLS began in 1996, but by 2006 it was beginning to look as though the grumblings of the critics – who had always insisted that Kansas was not a soccer city – were the truth of the matter. The team were not doing well, either on the pitch or at the gate, and they were playing in a gridiron stadium that was far too big for them.

There was much speculation that the team would be moved to another city. But it was bought by a group of local businessmen and a new 18,500-capacity stadium – arguably the best in MLS – was opened in 2011. The team was renamed Sporting Kansas City and sell-out crowds became a regular feature.

In fact, the rebranding of Kansas City has proved to be a major success story for MLS. It looks to have proved that the notion of barren "non-soccer" areas – that there are US cities that simply "don't like soccer" – is a thing of the past.

> "There's room for 30 or 40 teams here, maybe with promotion and relegation"
>
> Seamus O'Brien of New York Cosmos on the future of football in the US

Improbable home

Much the same could be said for beaten finalists Real Salt Lake, who are another successful MLS team – they were MLS Cup winners in 2009 – based in a city, Salt Lake City, that was once considered an improbable home for soccer.

The matter of deciding which cities can support a professional team is much on the mind of MLS commissioner Don Garber these days. But it's no longer a lengthy search. Nowadays, the cities come to MLS seeking a franchise, so Garber and MLS can afford to be highly picky.

David Beckham's group, who are ▸

Champions...Sporting Kansas City

SPORTING
adidas

On the up...Cosmos' Roversio outjumps Mike Randolph of Atlanta Silverbacks as his side win 1-0 in the NASL Soccer Bowl

seeking to put a team in Miami, has been made aware of this. A Beckham-led club is surely something MLS should jump at. But nothing will happen there, says Garber, until the stadium situation is worked out. At the moment there is no suitable stadium and the MLS definition of "suitable" is getting more and more precise. By now, it really means a new soccer-specific stadium has to be built, so there will be no agreement with Beckham and co until the plans and the financing for a stadium have been finalized.

Yet New York City, who were granted a franchise in May 2013 and are scheduled to begin play in 2015 do not have a stadium.

Expensive home city

New York City have yet to announce a coach – although it is widely rumoured that Jason Kreis, the coach at Real Salt Lake, this year's losing MLS Cup final coach, will take the job – but finding a home, or getting one built, in a crowded, expensive city is going to be far harder.

In that respect, NYCFC and MLS seem to have been upstaged by New York Cosmos, an ambitious club that bears the name of the iconic team of the 1970s.

Cosmos are not an MLS team – they play in the second-tier North American Soccer League (NASL) – but they have plans to build a soccer-specific stadium in Belmont, right on the borderline between the City and Long Island. It will seat 25,000 and will cost $400million.

Leading the rebirth of Cosmos is Seamus O'Brien, who is a successful sports marketing guru in Asia. He dismisses the ghosts of Cosmos past, saying he is only interested in the spirit of Cosmos future. And in O'Brien's view, that is a future that does not necessarily include MLS. His Cosmos, he says, have chosen not to seek MLS membership. Instead, they are quite content – for the moment – to be a part of the NASL.

O'Brien is talking of a development period of maybe five to 10 years, during which he foresees massive changes in global soccer, with the USA becoming "the biggest soccer market in the world".

To be a mover and shaker in this rapidly changing, free-flowing global market, O'Brien sees a necessity to operate with the freedom that all the other clubs throughout the world have. A freedom that he believes cannot exist in MLS, which operates within the strict – and parsimonious – financial guidelines of its single-entity structure, with its centralized management.

"The MLS model is not for us," says O'Brien. "The structure of that league did not suit this club. We want to be part of the global game."

While Cosmos and NASL do not pose any immediate threat to MLS, O'Brien is exposing the fundamental flaw in the arguments put forward by Garber that MLS aims to be one of the world's top leagues by 2022.

That will be ludicrously impossible as long as MLS retains its single-entity restrictions. These include a salary cap that, at around $3 million per team, is less than the individual salary of star players with top clubs.

For the moment, the MLS is cocooned from the wider world by the financial protection that single-entity offers. That picture is, as Garber paints it, highly encouraging. But there is a suggestion of troubles to come when Garber talks of the USA producing its own players. This is not an area in which the USA, despite a huge reservoir of raw talent, has been particularly successful.

And when a promising youth player is discovered, he is more than likely to be snapped up by a European club.

Until MLS can find a way to hang on to its own starlets – and is willing to spend money to bring in such players from overseas – any talk of it joining the list of the world's elite football clubs is just that...talk. **WS**

PLAYER OF THE SEASON

Mike Magee (Chicago Fire)

The league's second-top scorer with 21 goals, he joined Chicago from Los Angeles Galaxy in May and tripled his previous highest tally for a season.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON

Diego Valeri (Portland Timbers)

The 27-year-old Argentinian midfielder created 13 goals and scored 10 after joining from Lanus in January 2013.

COACH OF THE SEASON

Caleb Porter (Portland Timbers)

Took Timbers to the Western Conference regular-season title in a season during which they went on a 15-match unbeaten run – which was a record for an MLS coach in his first campaign.

On fire...Chicago's Magee had a fine season in front of goal

MARK GLEESON
in Cape Town

Against all odds

Al Ahly head for the Club World Cup having been crowned African champions for a record eighth time

Egyptian side Al Ahly defied the odds once again to extend their record-breaking run in the African Champions League and win the continental club competition for an eighth time. Yet again they overcame formidable obstacles to retain their title and qualify for the Club World Cup as the turmoil in their homeland threatens to render a former bastion of the game into a potential basket case.

An ageing side, a lack of match practice and the mental anguish of dealing with the strife around them would prove the undoing of most teams. But, for a second successive campaign, the Cairo-based club were victorious – a triumph that was made even more poignant this year by the influence of their long-time star Mohamed Aboutrika as he gets ready to retire.

The 35-year-old midfielder, who is widely regarded as the best African footballer never to have played for a club outside the continent, scored in both legs of the Final, against Orlando Pirates of South Africa. Al Ahly won 3-1 on aggregate, drawing 1-1 in the away leg in Soweto and then winning 2-0 eight days later in the return as the team made a first appearance in their home city since June.

Triumphant...Al Ahly players celebrate winning the CAF Champions League with a 2-0 victory in Cairo

While Aboutrika's five CAF Champions League titles in eight years – plus African Nations Cup titles in 2006 and 2008 – is a remarkable haul, it is not as impressive as that of Ahly's 37-year-old Wael Gomaa, who captained the side to his sixth medal, having played in Ahly's winning teams of 2001, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2012 and now 2013. It is a remarkable feat, unmatched anywhere else in the world.

Gomaa is obviously in the twilight of his career, and spent much of the 2013 Final under pressure, but what he lacks in pace he makes up for with uncanny anticipation and a steely determination.

Coup d'Etat

July's coup d'etat in Egypt brought a swift close to the domestic championship as it approached its play-off phase and therefore cut off Ahly's regular match practise. The team were also banished from playing in Cairo and Alexandria – the country's two major cities – which was a big blow to their Champions League hopes.

The military authorities ruled that all major games would have to be played in the Red Sea resort of El Gouna – whose tiny stadium holds just a few thousand spectators – as they were concerned that larger gatherings of supporters would add to the civil unrest.

But they did relent to the second leg of the Final being played in the capital, albeit with a restricted audience and not at the 70,000-seater Cairo International Stadium.

Ahly were allocated the 30,000-capacity Arab Contractors Stadium, which at least allowed a decent chunk of their fanatical support to back them and create an intimidatory atmosphere befitting of a continental club competition Final.

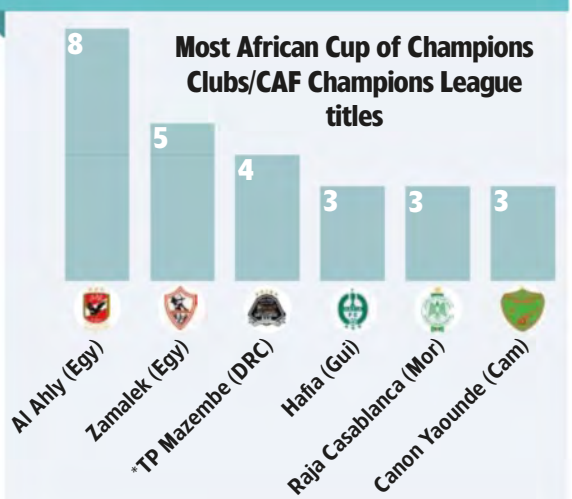
> Al Ahly await the possible resumption of domestic competition, but although a league competition is promised soon no date has yet been scheduled

Ahly had overcome similar odds to win last year's Champions League – after the Egyptian league was shut down for a year following the stadium disaster in Port Said, in which 74 of their supporters were killed – but this year they were not as convincing in getting to the Final of the continental competition.

They needed a semi-final penalty shoot-out to get past Coton Sport of Cameroon and they had already lost 3-0 at home to Pirates in the group phase in August, although there were extenuating circumstances as they played in extreme afternoon heat in El Gouna while fasting during Ramadan.

However, once ahead after 14 minutes of the first leg of the Final, they rarely looked like ceding the title as Ahly's remarkable winning habit kicked in once again. **WS**

CHAMPIONS OF AFRICA



(* including one as TP Englebert)

HOWARD JOHNSON
in Paris

Les Bleus are off to Brazil

Stunning turnaround in Paris secures World Cup finals place

As great escapes go, this one was right up there with Steve McQueen's legendary efforts in the film of the same name. But instead of ending up back in jail, France got out of it in the most inspiring fashion. The 3-0 home victory in the second leg of their World Cup play-off double-header with Ukraine helped the country enjoy a bit of footballing amnesia, allowing fans to forget the many and varied indiscretions of their national footballers and concentrate on one beautiful positive: qualification for Brazil.

The "Hand of Henry" in the 2009 play-off against the Republic of Ireland, the shameful player strike at the South African World Cup in 2010, the infamous Zahia underage prostitute affair involving Franck Ribery and Karim Benzema that same year, the threat of a withdrawal of labour in Ligue 1 over a proposed 75 per cent tax charge this season; all of this swept away in one evening of pure footballing pleasure.

France, it seemed, was finally ready to party and celebrate coach Didier Deschamps' team and their undeniably magnificent fightback. The players gave the 1998 World Cup winner the bumps out in the middle of the pitch at the Stade de France during the post-match celebrations as tricolours waved all around the ground.

How appropriate. Getting his team over the line had been the bumpiest of bumpy rides for the former Marseille coach. France finished in second place in Group I, behind Spain, which meant they could only qualify through the play-offs. But with the job done, the man famously dubbed "a water carrier" as a player by Eric Cantona was allowed to enjoy a champagne moment, while still keeping his feet firmly on the ground.

"It's a big moment, a fabulous moment," said 45-year-old Deschamps after the game. "But the praise should go to the players. I'm proud of them. It's really their story, not mine. I have immense pride in their performance and the fact that we've qualified. There's enormous satisfaction for all the staff."

That all-round satisfaction is, of course, all the greater given the state the French found themselves in after the first leg in Kiev just four days previously. A 2-0 defeat in a bitterly cold Olympic Stadium, where defender Laurent Koscielny was sent off after a clash with the home side's Oleksandr Kucher, had left France staring down the barrel, facing up to the very real possibility that they would miss out on qualification for the world's biggest footballing jamboree for the first time since 1994.

Under coach Mykhaylo Fomenko, Ukraine had themselves been unlucky to miss out on direct qualification from Group H, where they lost out on top spot to England by just one point. But the statistic that should have truly concerned France was the one showing Ukraine had conceded just four goals in their 11 qualifying matches. Needing to win by three clear goals in Paris seemed like the tallest of tall orders – but after qualification, Blaise Matuidi insisted that the result was never in doubt.

"Even after what happened in Kiev we still believed," said the Paris Saint-Germain midfielder. "You'll think I'm lying, but it's true. We told ourselves that there just couldn't be a World Cup without France being there.

"I said that we could do it, but only if we had a positive reaction to the defeat. Well, we got a reaction all right."

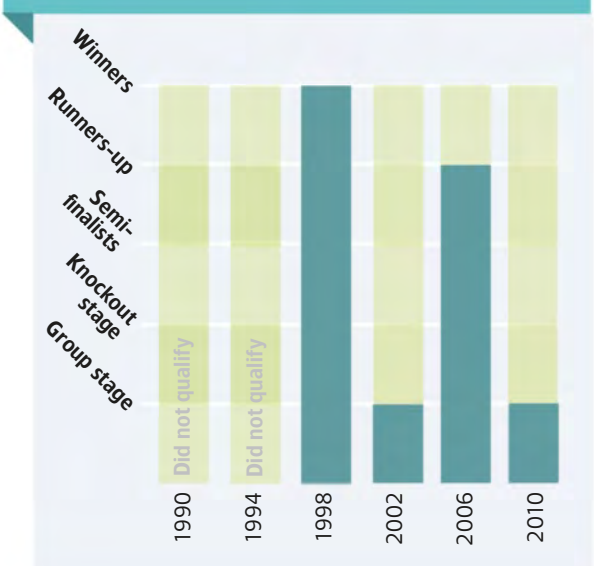
Matuidi wasn't wrong. And neither was Arsene Wenger, who was at the Stade de France in his capacity as TV pundit for TF1. "I think we'll do it tonight," predicted the Arsenal boss before the game, sitting alongside Bixente Lizarazu, himself a hero of France's 1998 World Cup-winning side in the selfsame stadium. And "do it" they certainly did.

Quality balls

France took the game to Ukraine from the first whistle, with Ribery tormenting the visitors' defence on both flanks, Benzema leading the line with aplomb and little Mathieu Valbuena delivering quality balls into the danger area almost at will.

Ukraine survived a number of hairy moments in the early stages, with goalkeeper Andriy Pyatov pulling off a couple of superb saves before France found an unlikely hero in Liverpool central defender Mamadou Sakho. Considered by some as fourth choice for the centre-back berth, and left on the bench in Kiev, the 23-year-old popped up in the 22nd minute and

FRANCE'S RECENT WORLD CUP RECORD



Strike one...Sakho (in blue) starts the French comeback

smartly turned the ball into the net after Pyatov could only parry Ribery's shot. When Benzema added a second 12 minutes later the excitement began to border on frenzy as France went in search of that all-important third goal.

The rattled Ukrainians had Yevhen Khacheridi sent off for a second bookable offence after the break and then Sakho provided the magic moment, claiming the goal despite a suspicion that defender Oleg Gusev turned the ball into his own net. But who could blame the man for making the most of his return to the city of his birth?

"There were some people who didn't believe in us," said the hero of the hour. "Now I hope we've managed to win everyone in France over." That much seemed certain as supporters danced off into the Parisian night.

The country's top-flight clubs were also hoping to win people over, having decided to abandon their proposed player strike on November 30 in protest over the controversial 75 per cent tax on incomes of over €1million a year that beleaguered president Francois Hollande is intent on bringing in.

> "It is the magic of football. Four days ago we were bad, very bad, but the players responded well. Tonight we played very well"
> France coach Didier Deschamps after the second leg

With sympathy from the French public hard to find when times are tough for everyone, the union representing the clubs made the announcement that industrial action was off after a meeting with MP Jean Glavany designed to resolve the dispute. Glavany suggested the government would stand firm on the principle of the new tax, but would look at ways of how best to apply it to the world of football. The clubs had already gained a concession limiting any tax demand to five per cent of their turnover.

Within football, opinions are still divided over how this dispute should be resolved. Montpellier president Louis Nicollin says: "They want money from everybody right now, not just football. I honestly think we have to contribute."

Meanwhile former France midfielder Benoit Pedretti, now with Ajaccio, claims that handing over 75 per cent of any salary above the million mark was "going too far".

Asked whether this hardened attitude would further tarnish the Ligue 1 players' image, he replied quite simply: "We're starting to get used to that!" WS

NICK BIDWELL
in Munich

Carry on Low say his bosses

But new contract won't keep Kiessling brigade off his back

When the German federation extended the contract of national coach Joachim Low they were not primarily rewarding him for a successful World Cup 2014 qualifying campaign. Nor were they clearing the decks to concentrate on their in-depth preparations for next year's main event.

In the eyes of federation president Wolfgang Niersbach, the new deal with Low was, above all, an act of symbolism – a "stand by our man" message to the *Bundestrainer*'s many critics, the ever-persistent band of naysayers who harshly believe that three big tournament near-misses (as either runners-up or semi-finalists) makes Low a loser.

One seam the anti-Low brigade mine with relish is the latter's reluctance to pick the prolific Bayer Leverkusen striker Stefan Kiessling.

Despite racking up 41 league goals in the previous two seasons, and finishing the last campaign as the Bundesliga's top marksman, Kiessling has not won a full cap in three years. Tellingly, he even failed to wangle a selection when Germany's top two front-men, Miroslav Klose and Mario Gomez, were ruled out by injury for World Cup ties against the Republic of Ireland and Sweden.

With good German strikers as rare as panda pregnancies and the in-form Kiessling shivering out in the cold, the situation ostensibly makes no sense.

So just why is Low auditioning for the role of Mr Freeze?

Pressing his case...the media campaign for Kiessling to be called up for Germany cuts no ice with Low

Personal chemistry

In the absence of an explanation from Low, some suggest he does not regard Kiessling as a team player. Others claim Low prefers younger and friskier players to the 29-year-old Leverkusener, while another school of thought maintains it's all a matter of poor personal chemistry.

Another reason, equally plausible, is that "Jogi" simply will not take his selection cues from the media. The more the pundits press the claims of Kiessling, the more Low digs in his heels. It's quite straightforward really. Every time outsiders take on the role of *consigliere*, the godfather has an allergic reaction.

In essence, this affair is almost an irrelevance to Low. He has his front-line hierarchy in place and feels absolutely no reason to change it. And why would he? As proved by the 36 goals his team piled up in their 10 World Cup qualifiers, he already has all the firepower he needs. Whatever Low may say, however, the German media have no intention whatsoever in ignoring Kiessling. Whether dissecting the latter's national team exclusion or picking over the ghost goal he "scored" in October, they just cannot get enough of the ace finisher and his controversial storylines.

Officially credited with Leverkusen's second goal in a 2-1 victory at Hoffenheim, Kiessling did not hit the target at all as his header, from a corner, shaved a post before entering the goal via a hole in the side netting. How referee Felix Brych and his assistants came to validate such an effort only they know, but rubber-stamp it they most certainly did.

> "In this job you can't blow with the wind. I am the Germany coach. I make the decisions"
>
> Joachim Low

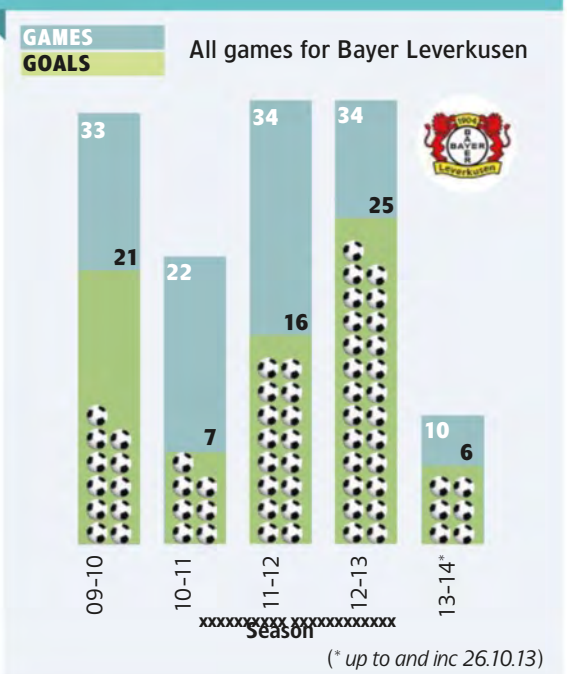
And Kiessling is not the only one currently struggling to book a place on the plane to Brazil this summer.

Sami Khedira faces a race against time to be fit for the finals after he tore ligaments in his right knee during Germany's 1-1 draw with Italy.

The 26-year-old Real Madrid midfielder was injured in a tackle with Andrea Pirlo and is expected to miss the rest of the season.

"He is a great fighter, on and off the pitch," says Germany coach Joachim Low. "He's always positive. That will help him, so I'm optimistic he'll be fit again before the World Cup kicks off." WS

KIESSLING'S FIVE-YEAR BUNDESLIGA RECORD



SEAN CREEDON
in Dublin

Odd couple O'Neill and Keane take charge

New management duo take their first steps towards Euro 2016

"A match made in heaven or a marriage made in hell?" That was one Irish newspaper headline on the day it was confirmed that new national manager Martin O'Neill had asked Roy Keane to be his number two.

Once Giovanni Trapattoni walked away in early September, O'Neill was always favourite to take over. But his decision to bring Keane on board was a major surprise.

The pair had worked together on TV as match analysts, but Keane's flare-up with Mick McCarthy in Saipan in 2002 is still talked about and he has been critical of the FAI and some of the Irish players in the past.

FAI chief executive John Delaney said that when he met Keane they talked about Saipan for approximately 30 seconds, stating: "It happened 11 years ago and at this stage it's probably time for everybody involved to move on."

The FAI is not exactly flush with cash right now, and paying off the debt on the Aviva Stadium is proving to be a millstone. But, as he did with Trapattoni, telecommunications billionaire Denis O'Brien is once again paying the wages of the manager and his high-profile assistant. And the new duo have certainly given Irish football a major boost, with a crowd of over 37,000 for November's friendly against Latvia in Dublin helping the FAI's finances and giving hope for future results.

While O'Neill has joked that he is the "bad cop" to Keane's "bad bad cop", he is serious about the challenge ahead, saying: "It's going to be a big change from club management. When you lose a football match at club level, you generally have an opportunity to put it right the following week. I am not sure what I will be like if I have three months to think about it.

"I have dealt with pressure all my life and I have been given an opportunity now that I am determined to grasp. I am very much looking forward to getting the Republic to the European Championship finals in 2016."

Keane admits that he was disappointed not to have been given another opportunity to manage since leaving Ipswich Town two years ago, but says he has no problem being a number two. He said that O'Neill was tougher than he looked and described himself as a "Mother Teresa" figure compared with the manager, adding: "People have this thing about how you are not supposed to get angry, but anger is a good emotion to have. As you get older, hopefully you also get a bit wiser."

Teamwork...Keane and O'Neill (far right) on the bench together for the first time, against Latvia in Dublin

Staff additions

O'Neill and Keane shared the coaching duties for the country's first two games, but Steve Walford, who has worked with O'Neill in the past, may be added to the coaching staff. Former international Seamus McDonagh has replaced Alan Kelly as goalkeeping coach.

O'Neill's reign began with an impressive 3-0 win over Latvia, with the Irish looking fresh and anxious to put the opposition under pressure. But Poland in Poznan proved far tougher and Ireland were lucky to hang on for a 0-0 draw.

O'Neill used 21 players over the two games as he tried to take a look at all of the squad chosen by caretaker Noel King prior to his own appointment. For his two games in charge, King had recalled Kevin Doyle, Darron Gibson, Andy Reid and Anthony Stokes, all of whom were out of favour with Trapattoni.

The Republic's next game is against Serbia in Dublin on March 5 – by which time O'Neill will have a better idea of the players at his disposal. **WS**

> "Despite being sacked by Sunderland I have never lost my energy, never lost my enthusiasm and that keeps me going"
> Martin O'Neill

A new era...the programme for the Latvia game

PADDY AGNEW
in Rome

Fearful Nocerina threatened by their own fans

Magistrates launch probe as lower-league game is called off after team end up with six players

Rarely is a professional game abandoned because one team is down to just six players, but that is exactly what happened in November's third-tier derby between Campania clubs Salernitana and Nocerina.

Lower-league football in southern Italy has always been a passionate affair, dominated by fierce local rivalries. And in this case, such is the bad blood between the rival fans that police banned Nocerina supporters from travelling to Salerno for the game.

The Nocerina ultras, however, seemingly decided that if they couldn't go to the match, then the match couldn't be played.

It is claimed that a delegation of Nocerina followers "paid a visit" to the team hotel hours before the derby and issued threats to their own players. As anyone who lives and works in the Camorra-infested Campania region of Naples knows, this is not an area where you take death threats lightly – so much so that the Nocerina players initially refused to play, only taking to the field after receiving assurances from a local police officer.

As it happened, in a country where almost the only thing that actually starts on time is football, this particular match began more than half an hour late.

However, it soon became clear that this would be no ordinary game.

In the first minute, Nocerina made all three of their permitted substitutions. In the next 20 minutes, no less than five Nocerina players had to be carried or helped from the field. With the team reduced to six players, referee Juan Sacchi had no option but to abandon the game.

Afterwards, Nocerina sports director Luigi Pavarese attempted to justify his players' actions, claiming that their injuries had happened because they had not done their pre-match warm-up. But Salerno magistrates immediately opened an investigation into the affair, with "unknown parties" accused of intimidation and unauthorised public demonstration.

Although this could be a case of a local issue that got out of hand, many people believe that the hand of organised crime, in this case the Camorra, is in some way involved. It was perhaps significant that, during the short-lived match, a plane flew over Salernitana's Stadio Arechi displaying a banner that read "Respect For Nocerina And The Ultras".

While Italian Football Federation president Giancarlo Abete called the affair a "humiliating spectacle", it should be pointed out that this was a humiliating spectacle of the recurring kind.

The most spectacular of many examples of "ultra power" in the last decade was in 2004 when the Rome derby was abandoned after ultras made half-time threats against Roma and Lazio players following the "death" of a child outside the stadium. No one had been killed but, even though this was repeatedly announced on the public address system, fan power won out and the game was abandoned.

Then there was the ugly spectacle in April 2012 when fans stopped Genoa's home game with Siena early in the second half with the relegation-threatened hosts trailing 4-0. Fans threw fireworks onto the pitch and climbed on to the tunnel leading to the dressing rooms, forcing the suspension of the game. At that point, the ultras demanded that the Genoa players hand over their team shirts as they were deemed "unworthy" of wearing them.

Remarkably, most of the team did indeed hand over their shirts, leading to the surreal sight of captain Marco Rossi giving a bunch of shirts to the ultra bosses. In the end, after a 45-minute delay, the game continued and Genoa lost 4-1, although they did still stay up.

Under suspicion...another Nocerina player goes down injured at Salernitana

Sporting gesture

Nocerina were also in the news in early October after they lost another local derby, 1-0 at neighbours Benevento. On that occasion, Benevento captain Felice Evacuo, a former Nocerina player, made the sporting gesture of going to salute the visiting fans at the end of the game.

However, such was the anger among the Benevento ultras that within hours they were calling for him to be dismissed by the club. Evacuo was forced to release an embarrassing TV statement in which he apologised for any offence given to

WHAT THE PAPERS SAY

La Gazzetta dello Sport
Tutto il rosa della vita
ULTIMO STADIO

Gazzetta dello Sport **devoted the first five pages of its edition on November 13 to the fallout from the Salernitana-Nocerina game.**

Under a headline "Football, in the grip of the ultra world", the paper said a long-term strategy was needed to deal with the problem. It added: "This was confirmation of a sport that has fallen into the grip of the ultra groups. There is still anarchy in the stadiums.

"To isolate the violent, you need to go beyond identity cards and turnstiles; dialogue is needed with the real fans."

> "No matter what way you look at it, we've been unable to resolve the problem of violence in Italy"
>
> National coach Cesare Prandelli

the Benevento fans in order to both remain at the club and to guarantee his family's well-being.

In late November, 15 Nocerina fans were arrested for their role in riots before the opening game of the season, three months earlier, at home to Perugia. It says much about Nocerina's fan base that four of the 15 were already detained in prison while another who should have been arrested, 27-year-old Guido Garzillo, had in the meantime been killed in an apparently unrelated shooting.

Meanwhile, Internazionale's new majority shareholder, Erick Thohir, has been out and about since officially taking over the club in mid-November. Having completed the €250million deal for a 70 per cent shareholding, Indonesian entrepreneur Thohir has now been named club president, with former owner Massimo Moratti appointed honorary chairman.

Having made his visit to the club's Pinetina training complex, in the company of Moratti, in order to meet the players and coach Walter Mazzari, Thohir did the media rounds and spent a morning at *Gazzetta Dello Sport* before doing an interview on *Che Tempo Fa*, one of Italy's most popular TV chat programmes. He also dropped in on Roberto Maroni, president of the Lombardy region, in order to press the case for Inter to be given permission to build its own new stadium, rather than continue to use the city-owned San Siro.

Confrontation...fans surround Nocerina players (in red tops) outside the team's hotel

In all of this, Thohir has been visibly keen to reassure Inter fans that he wants the club to regain its place among the 10 strongest clubs in the world. He has sounded very enthusiastic, likening Mazzari to former boss Jose Mourinho and expressing the hope that Inter might make it to the 2016 Champions League Final, especially if it were to be played at San Siro.

Best of all, for the benefit of the assembled media, Thohir indulged in the classic Inter chant of "*Chi non salta, rossonero e*" (whoever does not jump up and down is a Milan fan), much to the delight of the Inter faithful. **WS**

JAMES MONTAGUE
in Zagreb

Simunic sours country's big night

Nationalist salute harks back to dark days of pro-fascist rulers

Josip Simunic of Dinamo Zagreb is a player notorious for escaping the appropriate punishment his sometimes reckless behaviour deserves.

Famously shown three yellow cards before being sent off in the 2006 World Cup finals, that aberration effectively ended the career of referee Graham Poll. And Croatia's Australian-born defender could also have finished the playing career of Serbia striker Miralem Sulejmani in their September World Cup qualifier.

His last-ditch, red-card challenge has variously been derided as the "worst tackle in the history of football", an "assault" and an incident that "put Croatian and Serbian relations back 20 years".

Simunic was, of course, unapologetic. "I'd do it again," he said after the game.

in trouble...Simunic roars out his controversial message after Croatia's victory

Some Serbians wanted him to receive a life ban; he got two matches.

However, at a freezing cold Maksimir Stadium in Zagreb – after Croatia had qualified for their fourth World Cup finals since independence by beating Iceland 2-0 in the second leg of their 2014 World Cup play-off – Simunic's luck finally ran out.

It had been a supreme performance by Croatia against the surprise underdogs of the European qualification campaign. Drawn from pot four, alongside the likes of San Marino and Andorra, Iceland lost only once away from home and finished second in their group, behind Switzerland.

In the first leg of the play-off, in Reykjavik, Iceland battled to a goalless draw despite going down to 10 men for most of the second half. But they froze in Zagreb. Even after Mario Mandzukic had been shown a straight red for an appalling, knee-high, studs-up challenge at the end of the first half, Croatia dominated proceedings.

When the final whistle blew, and as Croatia's players celebrated wildly, Simunic was handed the stadium microphone and ran to the fans. "For the homeland!" he shouted. "Ready," the crowd replied on cue.

For the uninitiated, Simunic's words could have been mistaken for a slice of patriotism. However, the chant was more than that; it was used as a salute by the forces of the Ustasha, Croatia's pro-fascist, pro-Nazi rulers during World War II.

Afterwards, Simunic was unrepentant as the Croatian public prosecutor handed him a £2,600 fine for "spreading racial hatred". And FIFA also got involved, opening up proceedings against the 35-year-old, with the possibility of a six-match ban which would effectively end any chance he might have had of appearing in his third World Cup finals.

It was a distasteful finale to what had been former Croatia international Niko Kovac's second game in charge of the national side. It also put an end to the romantic idea of Iceland – with a population of just over 300,000 – becoming the smallest nation to ever qualify for the World Cup.

"I knew this would be one of the hardest months in my life," said Kovac after the game. "Today was a demonstration of power and I have to congratulate my players for that. I'd give straight As to them all." WS

> "I hereby want to deny [my words] contained any political context. They were guided exclusively by my love for my people and homeland"
>
> Josip Simunic

ICELAND'S MOVIE-MAKING KEEPER

Shooting...Halldorsson

Hannes Halldorsson, Iceland's goalkeeper in their two play-off games against Croatia, was the only part-time, home-based player in his country's squad. His full-time job is as a movie director – and he directed Iceland's Eurovision Song Contest entry in 2012.

He made his first feature film in 1996, explaining: "It was a small action comedy, when I was 12, with a group of friends. I wasn't the action hero. It was like Superman but we called it *Swimming Man*. He was wearing a stupid outfit."

The 29-year-old also directed his team-mates in a promotional video for Icelandair – which was something he found tougher than he thought it would be. "It was weird," says Halldorsson. "It feels personal when you keep them out in the cold. With actors you keep your distance. The players were saying, "Hey, it's cold can we stop?' But you can't. I had to act in it too."

His latest project is a full-length horror movie. "My aim is to make one big film while I'm a player," he revealed. "It's a supernatural low-key ghost thriller."

BRIAN HOMEWOOD
in Vienna

Player sacked in match-fix scandal

Top-flight defender claims to have been blackmailed by former international striker

Photo: BPI/Imago

Centre of attention...Taboga (fourth left) with former Grodig team-mates

Picture-perfect Grodig is a quintessential Alpine town where cows graze peacefully in the meadows and the nearest thing to a crime wave is when more than one household puts out its rubbish on the wrong day.

Yet the market town of 6,000 inhabitants, situated just outside Salzburg and only a couple of kilometres from the German border, now finds its name caught up in football's latest match-fixing scandal – which has led to one player being sacked by his club and a former Austria striker held in custody on charges of blackmail.

Until early November, the local team, whose tiny Untersbergarena holds barely 4,000 fans, had been thoroughly enjoying their debut campaign in the top flight, managing shock wins away to Austria Vienna and Rapid Vienna, and blasting seven goals past Admira.

But the peace was rudely shattered by reports that Grodig defender Dominique Taboga had been blackmailed by three men, including former Austria striker Sanel Kuljic, following an attempt at match fixing.

Taboga, who had played alongside Kuljic at Kapfenberger in 2012, initially told his club that he had been blackmailed after refusing to take part in match fixing and was forced to hand over €30,000. The club alerted the police, who arrested the three men the following day when Taboga handed over a further €3,000 in a shopping-centre car park after setting up a meeting.

At that point, Taboga appeared to be something of a hero and a possible new figurehead for FIFA in its fight against match fixing. But two days later there was a new twist when Grodig announced they had dismissed Taboga after he tried to persuade four other players, three of whom are still at the club, to take part in match fixing.

"Dominique Taboga has confirmed he talked about it with four players," explained Grodig general manager Christian Haas. "That's why we were forced into terminating his contract.

"All the players confirmed to me that they haven't been manipulating in any way. I am proud of that. Hopefully, we can now carry on in peace."

The club may not be out of the woods, however, as questions remain as to why the four players in question – who have not been named – had not reported the incidents at the time.

Far from clear

While the three men who were arrested – including Kuljic, the league joint-top goalscorer with Ried in 2006, and a Vienna-based Czech citizen known as "Sulim D" – are held in custody pending further investigation, it remains far from clear what exactly happened.

One suggestion is that Taboga, who was widely known to have financial problems, borrowed €65,000 from Kuljic in 2012 but had trouble repaying the loan. The situation was further complicated when Kuljic, who won 20 caps for Austria and was within a hair's breadth of making the Euro 2008 squad, suffered a career-ending injury and reportedly demanded that Taboga's repayments be speeded up.

The *Salzburger Nachrichten* reported that Taboga deliberately tried to give away a penalty in a match against Salzburg in October. The newspaper said that Sulim D had placed a bet on the penalty with the intention of using the winnings to pay off part of the player's debts. Taboga's tackle on Dusan Svento happened deep into stoppage time with the visitors leading 3-0. But, despite Salzburg appeals for a penalty, play was waved on and the incident passed largely unnoticed at the time.

There were also claims that Taboga had at one point been held at gunpoint, but these were later withdrawn.

And this is not the first match-fixing case to have hit Austrian football.

In December 2012, the *Kurier* newspaper alleged that a group of players at First Vienna, the country's oldest club, had fixed three second division matches in the spring of 2011. Then, on the same day that Grodig fired Taboga, state prosecutors in Graz announced that they were still investigating suspected match fixing in 15 second-tier games between 2009 and 2011. It said that 14 of the original 22 suspects were still under investigation, including nine active players.

In spite of calls from FIFA for greater collaboration from state authorities, the Austrian Bundesliga was singularly ungrateful for the disclosure.

"I'm amazed that this type of information has been made public by the Graz prosecutors without co-ordination," said Bundesliga president Hans Rinner. "The mere mention of Bundesliga clubs opens the door for defamatory speculation and premature judgements."

FIFA's director of security Ralf Mutschke admitted that "co-operation between criminal authorities and sports law authorities can sometimes be difficult because of data protection laws", but added: "The Austrian FA has established good connections with the police, and they work together as much as they can in a spirit of trust." WS

MARTIN DEL PALACIO LANGER
in Mexico City

"El Tri" nightmare has a happy ending

The national side will be in Brazil despite their worst-ever qualifying campaign

When the referee blew for time in the Estadio Azteca, 110 million Mexicans sighed with relief. The national team had just thrashed New Zealand 5-1 to virtually book their ticket to Brazil 2014. The return leg, in Wellington, then saw another comfortable victory as "*El Tri*" cruised home 4-2 to provide a happy ending to a nightmare tale.

That Mexico managed to reach their sixth successive World Cup finals was a miracle after a dismal qualifying campaign in arguably the weakest confederation after Asia and Oceania. Fourth in the CONCACAF group – the worst finish in their history – they won only one home game and changed coaches as many times (three) as they scored goals at home. In the end they had to rely on arch-rivals USA, who had already qualified, to hand them the play-off spot by winning 3-2 in Panama with two goals in the dying minutes.

The trigger-happy press had started pointing fingers months before, first at coach Jose Manuel de la Torre then, after he was sacked in September and results still didn't go the team's way, their European-based stars were blamed.

Olympic-winning coach Luis Fernando Tena and five-times league champion Victor Vucetich had one and two games respectively before Club America boss Miguel Herrera took charge and decided to omit all the European-based players for the play-off against New Zealand. That stirred a heated debate – with half the fans in favour, castigating the players as "divas, more worried about money than the national team" while the other half wondered how the coach could dispose of his best players when needed most.

In the end, New Zealand were so poor that the debate was rendered pointless, but it was telling that the blame game involved such established stars as Javier Hernandez and Giovani Dos Santos, who were almost untouchable in the past. Although Herrera wants them back in the squad, the highly impressive Oribe Peralta and Raul Jimenez now look to have eclipsed them as the first-choice strikers.

The make-up of the team, however, is still very much in the air. After flirting with the idea of making yet another coaching change and hiring a big foreign name such as Marcelo Bielsa or Guus Hiddink, the Mexican FA has now settled on Herrera, a colourful character renowned for his attacking football.

Who will be in his squad for Brazil? Only two of the side that started against New Zealand played more than three games in the qualifying group and one of them, defender Francisco Javier Rodriguez, had been dropped after a poor showing in the Confederations Cup before being recalled by Herrera.

Mexico has quality foreign-based stars such as Hernandez, Dos Santos, Espanyol's Hector Moreno and even Carlos Vela, who for two years has impressed at Real Sociedad, but refused national call-ups. Domestic candidates include Peralta, midfielder Carlos Pena and a reinvigorated Rafa Marquez.

In theory, those players should make Mexico tough to beat in Brazil, but Herrera needs to find a way of making the combination work – something no coach has managed in the last year. He must also mend the psychological wounds left by the qualifying campaign.

If Herrera fails, Mexico could well continue to be the laughing stock they were during 2013. **WS**

On our way...coach Herrera and his bench celebrate a goal against New Zealand in the play-off first leg

> "Four coaches in a month says it all. The team lacks a style and an idea of what we should be doing on the field"
> Giovani Dos Santos

MEXICO COACHES

Won Drew Lost

Coach	Record	Win %
Sven Goran Eriksson (2008–09)	P13 W6 D1 L6	win 46%
Efrain Flores (2010)	P3 W1 D1 L1	win 33%
Jose Manuel de la Torre (2011–13)	P50 W27 D12 L11	win 54%
Luis Fernando Tena (2013)	P1 W0 D0 L1	win 0%
Victor Manuel Vucetich (2013)	P2 W1 D0 L1	win 50%
Miguel Herrera (2013-present)	P3 W3 D0 L0	win 100%

JOHN DUERDEN
in Guangzhou

A new power is rising in the East

Guangzhou Evergrande claim their first Asian Champions League title

Fever pitch...a crowd of 42,000 roared Guangzhou Evergrande on in the return leg of the Final in Canton

It is five o'clock on a Sunday morning and there are still a few Guangzhou Evergrande supporters stumbling around the streets of China's third-biggest city. They may be a little worse for wear, but they are determined to make the most of the greatest night in the history of Chinese club football.

Seven hours earlier, their team had won the 2013 AFC Champions League title, beating Seoul on away goals with a 1-1 draw at the Tianhe Stadium, following a 2-2 tie in South Korea two weeks earlier.

Although Korea had high hopes of one of its clubs winning the title for a fourth time in five years – and an 11th in total – Guangzhou travelled to the first leg of the Final, at the Seoul World Cup Stadium, as clear favourites. Guided by Italian coach Marcello Lippi (see *People of the Year*, page 60), the big-spending visitors' line-up included Argentina's Dario Conca, who has been one of Asia's best player in 2013, plus Brazilian stars Elkeson and Muriqui, and the majority of China's national side. Backed by around 12,000 of their own fans in a 55,000 crowd, the Chinese believed they could add to the country's only previous success in the competition, when Liaoning won what was then known as the Asian Club Championship in 1990.

Seoul arrived late for the first game after getting stuck in traffic 45 minutes before the kick-off, but they started quickly, taking a 12th-minute lead as Montenegro striker Dejan Damjanovic set-up Spanish-born Japan international Sergio Escudero to shoot home.

Guangzhou's foreign contingent had scored all 14 of their goals in convincing quarter- and semi-final wins over Qatari and Japanese opposition, and the trend continued when, on the half hour, an unmarked Elkeson equalised from a corner. Five minutes after the break it got worse for the hosts as Gao Lin scored from close range.

Seoul were in the middle of a fierce domestic title race, whereas Guangzhou had sewn up a third successive Chinese Super League championship two weeks earlier, but the Koreans fought back and Damjanovic scored a deserved equaliser four minutes from time.

In the two weeks leading up to the second leg, Seoul lost big games in their domestic championship and were still in need of points to qualify for the 2014 AFC Champions League – the winners don't get an automatic chance to defend their title – while Guangzhou were able to rest their entire starting XI for a trip to Shanghai in preparation.

> Muriqui's 13 goals for Guangzhou Evergrande set a new record for a single AFC Champions League campaign

Local excitement

On their arrival in China, Seoul were given an American gridiron pitch on which to train, after which local fans jeered the players and shone laser beams into their eyes as they sat on the team bus. There was undoubtedly an excitement in Guangzhou – and if Korea was not excited by the prospect of winning the Champions League, China certainly was.

Titan Sports, one of China's best-selling newspapers, declared on the morning of the game that "today, we are all Guangzhou fans" – and, according to Weibo, China's version of Twitter, 94 per cent of the nation's football fans were backing the Cantonese team.

Four hours before kick-off, fans were hanging on the steel barriers erected by police on a sticky afternoon in the Pearl River Delta. With two hours to go, over 40,000 were inside the stadium.

The atmosphere was deafening as Guangzhou dominated the first half, but it was still goalless at the interval.

If there had been a roof on the arena, it would have blown clean off just before the hour when Elkeson produced a moment of world-class skill to shoot past Seoul goalkeeper Kim Yong-dae. Four minutes later it was the 1,000 or so Seoul fans that could be heard as Damjanovic put his team level. Despite Guangzhou's nerves the Koreans didn't push forward as expected and, in the end, the hosts hung on fairly comfortably.

At the final whistle Lippi was thrown into the air numerous times by his players and staff in front of 42,000 delighted supporters, almost all of whom were wearing red. The coach later told journalists that while this triumph may have ranked below his 2006 World Cup win with Italy, it equalled his 1996 UEFA Champions League success with Juventus.

Despite mutterings about the money that the club has spent, Guangzhou's victory pushed the AFC Champions League into the international spotlight with much greater force than any past champion. The big question now is how far can they go at the Club World Cup and beyond? WS

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WorldSoccer Awards & WorldSoccer People of the Year

The results of our 31st annual poll, plus – in a special end-of-year feature – we turn the spotlight on the personalities who helped to shape football in 2013

Ronaldo on top of the world

Portuguese star beats Messi and Ribery to take World Player prize

Cristiano Ronaldo is *World Soccer*'s World Player of the year for the second time. The Portuguese star finished ahead of Barcelona's Lionel Messi and Franck Ribery of Bayern Munich in our annual poll. The winner in 2008, he was runner-up to Messi when the Argentinian won his third World Player title last year. But the tables have been turned and Ronaldo was the clear winner this time.

The award is a recognition of Ronaldo's stunning form for Real Madrid over the last 12 months, as well as his starring role in Portugal's World Cup qualification. In November, he scored all four goals in his country's play-off victory. Paris Saint-Germain's Zlatan Ibrahimovic, whose Sweden side were defeated by Portugal in those games, finished fourth in the poll.

Arjen Robben, scorer of the winning goal in Bayern Munich's Champions League Final victory over Borussia Dortmund at Wembley last May, was fifth and Neymar, the star of Brazil's success in last summer's Confederations Cup, finished sixth

The other winners of the *World Soccer* Awards, now in their 31st year, were Jupp Heynckes and Bayern Munich, emphatic winners of the Manager and Team of the Year respectively.

The awards were decided by votes from a panel of journalists and pundits from around the globe. Members of the panel chose their top 10 players of the year, with points (ranging from one to 10) awarded to each selection.

WORLD PLAYER OF THE YEAR 2013

		Points
1	Cristiano Ronaldo (Real Madrid & Portugal)	1075
2	Lionel Messi (Barcelona & Argentina)	926
3	Franck Ribery (Bayern Munich & France)	870
4	Zlatan Ibrahimovic (Paris Saint-Germain & Sweden)	658
5	Arjen Robben (Bayern Munich & Holland)	324
6	Neymar (Santos/Barcelona & Brazil)	286
7	Philipp Lahm (Bayern Munich & Germany)	255
8	Robin Van Persie (Manchester United & Holland)	251
9	Robert Lewandowski (Borussia Dortmund & Poland)	250
10	Gareth Bale (Tottenham Hotspur/Real Madrid & Wales)	187
11	Radamel Falcao (Atletico Madrid/Monaco & Colombia)	158
12	Andres Iniesta (Barcelona & Spain)	157
13	Thomas Muller (Bayern Munich & Germany)	123
14	Luis Suarez (Liverpool & Uruguay)	101
15	Bastian Schweinsteiger (Bayern Munich & Germany)	100
16	Andrea Pirlo (Juventus & Italy)	94
17	Manuel Neuer (Bayern Munich & Germany)	86
18	Mesut Ozil (Real Madrid/Arsenal & Germany)	78
19	Edinson Cavani (Napoli/Paris Saint-Germain & Uruguay)	65
20	Sergio Aguero (Manchester City & Argentina)	48
21	Yaya Toure (Manchester City & Ivory Coast)	40
22	Marco Reus (Borussia Dortmund & Germany)	35
23	Thiago Silva (Paris Saint-Germain & Brazil)	26
24	Arturo Vidal (Juventus & Chile)	25
25	Juan Mata (Chelsea & Spain)	21
26	Xavi (Barcelona & Spain)	19
	Andriy Yarmolenko (Dynamo Kiev & Ukraine)	19
28	Mario Gotze (Borussia Dortmund/Bayern Munich & Germany)	15
29	Ilkay Gungodan (Borussia Dortmund & Germany)	14
30	Ronaldinho (Atletico Mineiro & Brazil)	12
31	Thibaut Courtois (Atletico Madrid & Belgium)	11
	Marek Hamsik (Napoli & Slovakia)	11
	Paul Pogba (Juventus & France)	11
34	Mohamed Aboutrika (Al Ahly & Egypt)	10
	Eden Hazard (Chelsea & Belgium)	10
	Muriqui (Guangzhou Evergrande & Brazil)	10
	Wayne Rooney (Manchester United & England)	10
	Victor Valdes (Barcelona & Spain)	10
39	Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang (St-Etienne/Bor Dortmund & Gabon)	9
40	Diego Costa (Atletico Madrid & Brazil/Spain)	8
41	Sergio Ramos (Real Madrid & Spain)	7
42	Sergio Busquets (Barcelona & Spain)	6
	Dante (Bayern Munich & Brazil)	6
	Angel Di Maria (Real Madrid & Argentina)	6
	Branislav Ivanovic (Chelsea & Serbia)	6
	Aaron Ramsey (Arsenal & Wales)	6
	Raphael Varane (Real Madrid & France)	6
48	Amer Deeb (Al Wehdat & Jordan)	5
	Alexis Sanchez (Barcelona & Chile)	5
	Roman Weidenfeller (Borussia Dortmund & Germany)	5
51	David Alaba (Bayern Munich & Austria)	4
	Dario Conca (Guangzhou Evergrande & Argentina)	4
	Fred (Fluminense & Brazil)	4
	Mario Mandzukic (Bayern Munich & Croatia)	4
	Isco (Malaga/Real Madrid & Spain)	4
	Shinji Okazaki (Stuttgart/Mainz & Japan)	4
	Humberto Suazo (Monterrey & Chile)	4
	Francesco Totti (Roma & Italy)	4
59	Petr Cech (Chelsea & Czech Republic)	3
	Vincent Enyeama (Lille & Nigeria)	3
	Nemanja Matic (Benfica & Serbia)	3
	David Silva (Manchester City & Spain)	3
63	Xabi Alonso (Real Madrid & Spain)	2
	Andrea Barzagli (Juventus & Italy)	2
	Mats Hummels (Borussia Dortmund & Germany)	2
	Vincent Kompany (Manchester City & Belgium)	2
	Michu (Swansea City & Spain)	2
	Oscar (Chelsea & Brazil)	2
69	Mario Balotelli (Milan & Italy)	1
	Gianluigi Buffon (Juventus & Italy)	1
	Christian Eriksen (Ajax/Tottenham Hotspur & Denmark)	1
	Samuel Eto'o (Anzhi/Chelsea & Cameroon)	1
	Ryan Giggs (Manchester United & Wales)	1
	Javi Martinez (Bayern Munich & Spain)	1
	Blaise Matuidi (Paris Saint-Germain & France)	1
	Henrikh Mkhitaryan (Shakhtar Donetsk/Bor Dortmund & Armenia)	1
	Joao Moutinho (Porto/Monaco & Portugal)	1
	Paulinho (Corinthians/Tottenham Hotspur & Brazil)	1
	Mohamed Salah (Basle & Egypt)	1
	Carlos Tevez (Manchester City/Juventus & Argentina)	1

WORLD MANAGER OF THE YEAR 2013

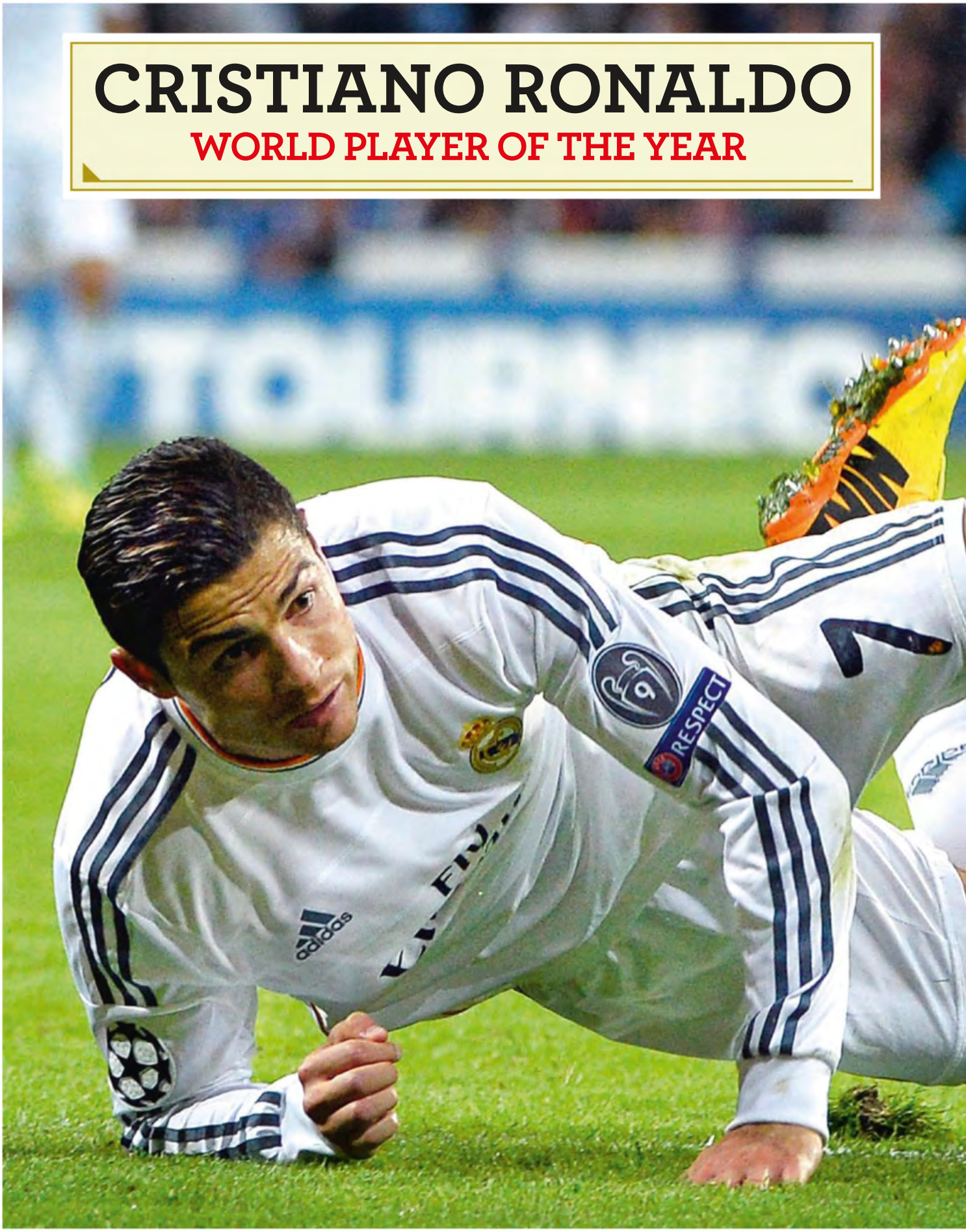
1	Jupp Heynckes (Bayern Munich)	86
2	Jurgen Klopp (Borussia Dortmund)	15
3	Diego Simeone (Atletico Madrid)	5
4	Alex Ferguson (Manchester United)	4
5	Vicente Del Bosque (Spain)	2
	Pep Guardiola (Bayern Munich)	2
	Marcello Lippi (Guangzhou Evergrande)	2
8	Carlos Ancelotti (Paris Saint-Germain/Real Madrid)	1
	Antonio Conte (Juventus)	1
	Lars Lagerback (Iceland)	1
	Safet Susic (Bosnia-Herzegovina)	1
	Oscar Tabarez (Uruguay)	1
	Arsene Wenger (Arsenal)	1

WORLD TEAM OF THE YEAR 2013

1	Bayern Munich	118
2	Atletico Madrid	1
	Borussia Dortmund	1
	Bosnia-Herzegovina	1
	Germany	1

CRISTIANO RONALDO

WORLD PLAYER OF THE YEAR



The pursuit of perfection

The relentless quest for excellence has finally paid off for the Real Madrid and Portugal forward

Forty-five thousand Cristiano Ronaldos turned up for Real Madrid's Champions League game against Galatasaray at the end of November. About the only Cristiano Ronaldo that didn't was the real one. Not on the pitch, anyway. For once, the Portuguese attacker was not tearing up defences; instead, he was up in the glass-fronted VIP box, recovering from a minor injury as down on the pitch his team-mates beat the Turkish side 4-0.

Not that it stopped Ronaldo being the protagonist. In the 77th minute, the Santiago

Bernabeu launched into a chant of "*Cristiano Ronaldo, balon de oro*". At the same time, fans lifted masks to their faces. It was a surreal sight, a kind of *Being Cristiano Ronaldo*. They had been handing the masks out before the game; 45,000 of them. Ronaldo lifted a hand, grateful for their support.

It is unanimous. Real Madrid's fans might have taken their time but now there are no doubts; they have embraced him wholeheartedly. Their former reticence just looks bizarre. Some are even daring to think the unthinkable: could Ronaldo be the best player that ever played for Real Madrid? No player will ever have the impact on the club that Alfredo Di Stefano did – the man without whom modern Madrid simply does not make sense – but the question hovers.

Certainly, Ronaldo's statistics make for frightening reading. In fact, it hardly seems worth outlining them because by the time this magazine is on sale his tallies will, inevitably, have changed. This is the man who scored his first 200 Real Madrid goals in just 197 games, who got to 150 quicker than a goal a game and who has just kept on accelerating. He recently scored his 23rd hat-trick for the club.

Hungry for more... Ronaldo is breaking records by the season at the Bernabeu

Smashing records

In the past four league seasons, Ronaldo scored 26, 40, 46 and 34 goals, and he is on course to break those totals this term. He is already the fifth-top league scorer in the club's history, having overtaken Ferenc Puskas. By the end of the year, he is likely to have gone beyond Hugo Sanchez and possibly Carlos Santillana too. It is impossible to imagine him not smashing every record going.

He is just relentless and the pursuit of perfection means that he never lets up. He has had an extreme cold chamber installed at his home which aids recovery, and coaching staff tell the story of the night when Madrid returned from an away game in the Champions League. When the bus arrived at Valdebebas gone five in the morning, the players picked up their cars and headed home. Ronaldo didn't; he instead called on the physios and underwent a series of exercises. It is, they say, typical of him.

As Gerard Pique says: "He's the same [as he always was]. He's a player I have always admired because he's a worker who always wants more and more and more. He is a machine, he's so ambitious. He's naturally very strong but never, ever stops fighting to improve."

Right now, those who say he is the best are growing in numbers. The debate rages, as ever. Not just about who is the best player in the world but also – if indeed it is a different question – who has had the best 2013?

There are factors that go against Ronaldo. Last season he did not win anything. Madrid were knocked out in the Champions League semi-final, finished 15 points behind Barcelona and lost the Spanish Cup Final to Atletico Madrid, a game in which Ronaldo was sent off. Meanwhile, Portugal did not

Man on a mission...Ronaldo scores the second goal of his hat-trick against Sweden in the play-off second leg that took Portugal to the World Cup finals

qualify automatically for the World Cup.

Yet even the latter situation ended up going in Ronaldo's favour. An obligation became an opportunity and Ronaldo took it with both hands. Rarely has an individual so decisively marked such an important game as when he scored a brilliant hat-trick against Sweden in the World Cup play-off. It was billed as Zlatan versus Cristiano and there was only one winner, even though Ibrahimovic scored twice. Once again, Ronaldo had taken the chance to make a point.

One man who said that he preferred Lionel Messi was the FIFA president Sepp Blatter in his now infamous performance at Oxford University when, like a drunk grandad at a wedding, he did a pretty lamentable "impression" of Ronaldo, lurching up like some kind of robotic dinosaur. "Ronaldo is like a military commander," he said.

Ronaldo's response was furious at first. Then it was funny. He released a statement that said Blatter's display had shown the "respect" that FIFA had for him and said that he now "understood" certain things – presumably the fact that Messi had won four FIFA World Player awards in a row. Then he scored a hat-trick in his very next game: he celebrated the first by standing to attention and saluting, commander style.

In Madrid, wild and ridiculous conspiracy theories abounded, and accusations of FIFA bias and manipulation flew. But in the wake of the Sweden defeat, voting for the FIFA Ballon d'Or was reopened (with the winner to be announced in January). So much for bias. Suddenly, Ronaldo appeared to be the favourite again. Franck Ribery's chances seemed diminished. "I don't need big gestures to know I'm the best," Ribery said bitterly after the Ronaldo masks were brought out at the Bernabeu.

> "He's in the top two or three in the world, some say he is the best, yet he still wants to improve. I admire him because of that"
>
> Barcelona's Gerard Pique

But without the goals, without the Portuguese player's performances, the gesture would have been a hollow one. It was not just that mind-blowing display against Sweden that makes Ronaldo a strong case. This has been an extraordinary year for him, something that is reflected in the 28-year-old coming out on top in our vote.

If the face fits...Real Madrid fans wave their Ronaldo masks in support of his claim to FIFA's top award

After 14 weeks of the season he was top scorer in La Liga; after five match days he is top scorer in the Champions League too. For a second time he finished as the Champions League's top scorer last season. It was the first time in four years that Messi didn't finish on top of the pile. And he was the first player in Europe's biggest leagues to reach 50 goals in the calendar year of 2013. No one has scored more Champions League goals in 2013 either.

Unstoppable

Ronaldo appears unstoppable. He also appears more contented than ever. It took a while for Madrid's fans to warm to him – after all it is not much more than a year since he failed to celebrate a goal against Granada and afterwards admitted he was "sad".

His relationship with the president Florentino Perez was strained and the player warned him that he was not sure he wanted to continue. Now, he is going to the World Cup and is now the best paid player on the planet, having renewed his contract at Madrid.

A future without him seems unthinkable: he costs Madrid over €40million a year in wages but no one considers it anything other than money well spent. Ronaldo is *World Soccer's* Player of the Year. Real Madrid's fans love him so much that they pulled on 45,000 masks to show it.

Sid Lowe

PREVIOUS WINNERS

1982	Paolo Rossi (Juventus & Italy)
1983	Zico (Udinese & Brazil)
1984	Michel Platini (Juventus & France)
1985	Michel Platini (Juventus & France)
1986	Diego Maradona (Napoli & Argentina)
1987	Ruud Gullit (Milan & Holland)
1988	Marco Van Basten (Milan & Holland)
1989	Ruud Gullit (Milan & Holland)
1990	Lothar Matthaus (Internazionale & West Germany)
1991	Jean-Pierre Papin (Marseille & France)
1992	Marco Van Basten (Milan & Holland)
1993	Roberto Baggio (Juventus & Italy)
1994	Paolo Maldini (Milan & Italy)
1995	Gianluca Vialli (Juventus & Italy)
1996	Ronaldo (Barcelona & Brazil)
1997	Ronaldo (Barcelona/Internazionale & Brazil)
1998	Zinedine Zidane (Juventus & France)
1999	Rivaldo (Barcelona & Brazil)
2000	Luis Figo (Barcelona/Real Madrid & Portugal)
2001	Michael Owen (Liverpool & England)
2002	Ronaldo (Internazionale/Real Madrid & Brazil)
2003	Pavel Nedved (Juventus & Czech Republic)
2004	Ronaldinho (Barcelona & Brazil)
2005	Ronaldinho (Barcelona & Brazil)
2006	Fabio Cannavaro (Juventus/Real Madrid & Italy)
2007	Kaka (Milan & Brazil)
2008	Cristiano Ronaldo (Manchester United & Portugal)
2009	Lionel Messi (Barcelona & Argentina)
2010	Xavi (Barcelona & Spain)
2011	Lionel Messi (Barcelona & Argentina)
2012	Lionel Messi (Barcelona & Argentina)

BAYERN MUNICH

WORLD TEAM OF THE YEAR

Forward thinking

German treble holders take on the world

"This is the best and most impressive moment in our 113 years in business," declared Bayern Munich chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge at the club's recent annual general meeting. "We've experienced an unbelievable year. I believe there's never been a better time to be a Bayern fan."

Supporters of a certain vintage might beg to differ in the game of generational comparisons, preferring the warm glow of the mid-1970s when a team featuring the outstanding talents of Franz Beckenbauer, Gerd Muller, Sepp Maier, Franz "Bulle" Roth and Uli Hoeness claimed three straight European Cup titles. But even the most ardent oldie would have to admit that when it comes to single-season omnipotence, the class of 2012-13 simply has no equals, their place in history secured by German football's first-ever treble: Champions League, Bundesliga and German Cup.

Taking their motivational cue from the heartbreak of their backyard penalty shoot-out loss to Chelsea in the Champions League Final of 2012, Bayern's reaction was to regroup and hit straight back, their perfect mix of singular flair and collective cohesion powering them onwards and upwards in a blaze of goals and clean sheets.

Whether hammering Barcelona 7-0 on aggregate in Champions League semi-finals or domestically calling the shots – they lost only one league game all season and finished a massive 25 points ahead of runners-up Borussia Dortmund – Bayern more or less spent the campaign in cruise control; too cute, too skilled and too organised to be denied.

Equipped in every department with world-class calibre, Bayern always seemed to have a rabbit to pull out of the hat: a vital save from goalkeeper Manuel Neuer; the electrifying overlapping of full-backs Philipp Lahm and David Alaba; or Brazilian centre-back Dante galvanising his colleagues by word or deed. Midfield traffic cops Bastian Schweinsteiger and Javi Martinez responded with muscle and conviction in times of strife, Franck Ribery and Arjen Robben weaved their magic out wide, while front runners Mario Mandzukic and Thomas Muller fired the bullets.

Underpinning this know-how and ability was the sort of spirit to move mountains, a togetherness, resilience and a sheer relish for the heat of the battle. With the tone set by coach Jupp Heynckes' perfectionist tendencies and insistence on focus and humility, Bayern just kept on rollin'. No pit stops. No breakdowns. No wrong turns.

"I've never seen a more closely knit and determined group," said Heynckes after his side's 2-1 victory over Dortmund in the Champions League Final at Wembley. "Right from the beginning of the season, no one let up.

"The Chelsea defeat was a cruel blow, but we didn't let it get us down. Quite the opposite. We changed a lot of things [most of them related to defensive rigour and pressing], bought some new players [Dante, Martinez and Mandzukic] and worked on every last detail."

Done...Schweinsteiger (left) and Martinez leave Barcelona's Jordi Alba grounded in the Champions League semi-final

On retiring at the end of last season, Heynckes spoke about leaving successor Pep Guardiola "a team in a perfect shape" and no one was prepared to deny that assertion. Many felt the former Barcelona boss had inherited a poisoned chalice, that improving on perfection was mission impossible. But so far, so good. Guardiola has seen Bayern safely through to the Champions League knockout phase and kept them top of the Bundesliga tree. In beating Augsburg in November, the Bavarians became the proud owners of the longest unbroken run in German top-flight history (37 games) and, step by step, Guardiola is doing exactly what he was headhunted to do: carry on winning while cultivating a long-lasting and clearly defined playing style, a badge of excellence to remain even when he does eventually move on.

Euro kings...Bayern after beating Borussia Dortmund

European summit

Much to the delight of the Bayern hierarchy, their sporting and commercial "brand" continues to grow apace. Thanks to their Champions League triumph, their fifth in total, the club has re-established itself at the European summit, and at the club's AGM – an event where Wall Street met terrace celebration – executive board member Jan-Christian Dreesen had plenty of good news to convey, namely a record €432.8million turnover for 2012-13 and profits after tax of €14m, up from €11m in the previous exercise. It's 21 long years since Bayern were in the red

> "Make no mistake. It took an enormous amount of work to bring about our great results and the consistency we showed all season long"
> Jupp Heynckes

– no wonder Rummenigge describes the club as being "as fit as a fiddle".

While some like to pigeon-hole today's Bayern as a bean-counting corporate model this is only part of the story. With characters like maverick winger Ribery and director of sport Matthias Sammer stalking the scene, there is more than enough heart and soul to go around. And as for human foibles, they are all too evident.

Hoeness, the larger-than-life club president, goes on trial in 2014 for tax evasion and the media is currently awash with stories of the "Bayern mole" – the insider who leaked Guardiola's line-up and tactical plans to *Bild* newspaper on the eve of November's top-of-the-table trip to Dortmund.

Despite Bayern's 3-0 win – helped by Dortmund's injury-ravaged back-line – Guardiola was in no mood to crack open the champagne, opting instead to instigate an all-out search for the deep throat. "No matter who it is, heads will roll," he stormed. "I will throw him out. He will never play under me again."

Whether it be Guardiola, the notoriously hard-to-please Sammer, the directors looking to extend the club's global reach – plans are afoot for offices in Shanghai and New York – or their still-hungry star players, no one at Bayern ever seems satisfied. At the Allianz Arena standing still is forbidden.

Nick Bidwell

PREVIOUS WINNERS

1982	Brazil
1983	Hamburg
1984	France
1985	Everton
1986	Argentina
1987	Porto
1988	Holland
1989	Milan
1990	West Germany
1991	France
1992	Denmark
1993	Parma
1994	Milan
1995	Ajax
1996	Nigeria
1997	Borussia Dortmund
1998	France
1999	Manchester United
2000	France
2001	Liverpool
2002	Brazil
2003	Milan
2004	Greece
2005	Liverpool
2006	Barcelona
2007	Spain
2008	Spain
2009	Barcelona
2010	Spain
2011	Barcelona
2012	Spain

JUPP HEYNCKES
WORLD MANAGER OF THE YEAR

'Don Jupp' bows out in style

Veteran proved the perfect fit for Bayern

While the vast majority of retired workers have to make do with a watch or a clock on their send-off, Jupp Heynckes was the recipient of a far more substantial gift last spring, receiving widespread adulation and critical acclaim for his role as the architect of Bayern Munich's perfect season, winning the Champions League, Bundesliga and German Cup.

Fifteen years after steering Real Madrid to victory over Zinedine Zidane's Juventus in the 1998 Champions League Final, "Don Jupp" had a smile as wide as the Rhine as Bayern celebrated their fifth European title, at Wembley in May. And as only the fourth coach to lead two different clubs to the biggest prize in European football, his place in the record books is assured.

> "When you end your career with such a great season, you can consider yourself fortunate that you are 68 and not 28, because this is as good as it gets"
>
> Bayern's Thomas Muller on Heynckes

Cynics might suggest any reasonably competent coach could have made hay with a 2012-13 Bayern squad stacked with talent and experience, but that would be grossly unfair on the 68-year-old former Borussia Monchengladbach and West Germany front runner. With expectations sky high, the dressing room full of wilful star names and the media spotlight raining relentlessly on the club, the man responsible for the first team at Bayern has many balls to keep up in the air. So it says everything about Heynckes that he has not once been caught napping, not even when the club announced midway through last term that they intended to bring in Pep Guardiola at the end of the season.

Heynckes, keen to stay for another campaign at least, felt he was being prodded towards the exit, but rather than whipping up a storm in the press he kept his head down and concentrated on the job in hand, maintaining the intensity of his players and making the right tactical and selection calls.

Ultimate retort

The triple he went on to mastermind was the ultimate retort to those who doubted him, but there was never any possibility of the hero of the hour signing off with a salvo of public point-scoring. He is too much the gentleman for that.

It takes great comprehension, sensitivity and psychological nous to manage a complex, high-profile team such as Bayern, and in his three spells in charge he has very much fitted the bill. In marked contrast to predecessors Felix Magath, Jurgen Klinsmann and Louis Van Gaal, whose bull-in-a-china-shop ways made enemies by the dozen, Heynckes always strove to be consensual and respectful of Bayern's traditions.

Trophies galore... Heynckes with the spoils of his final season in charge at the Allianz Arena

Meticulous, diplomatic and excellent at man-management, the low-key Heynckes was an ideal fit for the often volcanic "FC Hollywood". Winning teams only come about when the players buy into the coach's vision, and at Bayern last year the superstars certainly responded to Heynckes' plans for total domination at home and abroad.

Influenced during his own playing days at Gladbach by German coaching greats Hennes Weisweiler and Udo Lattek, Heynckes has very much earned the right to sit beside them in the Bundesliga Hall of Fame.

Nick Bidwell

PREVIOUS WINNERS

1982	Enzo Bearzot (Italy)
1983	Sepp Piontek (Denmark)
1984	Michel Hidalgo (France)
1985	Terry Venables (Barcelona)
1986	Guy Thys (Belgium)
1987	Johan Cruyff (Ajax)
1988	Rinus Michels (Holland/Bayer Leverkusen)
1989	Arrigo Sacchi (Milan)
1990	Franz Beckenbauer (West Germany)
1991	Michel Platini (France)
1992	Richard Moller Nielsen (Denmark)
1993	Alex Ferguson (Manchester United)
1994	Carlos Alberto Parreira (Brazil)
1995	Louis Van Gaal (Ajax)
1996	Berti Vogts (Germany)
1997	Ottmar Hitzfeld (Borussia Dortmund)
1998	Arsene Wenger (Arsenal)
1999	Alex Ferguson (Manchester United)
2000	Dino Zoff (Italy)
2001	Gerard Houllier (Liverpool)
2002	Guus Hiddink (South Korea)
2003	Carlo Ancelotti (Milan)
2004	Jose Mourinho (Porto/Chelsea)
2005	Jose Mourinho (Chelsea)
2006	Marcello Lippi (Italy)
2007	Alex Ferguson (Manchester United)
2008	Alex Ferguson (Manchester United)
2009	Pep Guardiola (Barcelona)
2010	Jose Mourinho (Internazionale/Real Madrid)
2011	Pep Guardiola (Barcelona)
2012	Vicente Del Bosque (Spain)

VOTING PANEL MEMBERS

- **Philippe AUCLAIR,** *France Football, England*
- **Domenic AQUILINA,** *World Soccer, Malta*
- **Paddy AGNEW,** *World Soccer, Italy*
- **Anthony BAFFOE,** *PFA, Ghana*
- **Radu BAICU,** *journalist, Romania*
- **Guillem BALAGUE,** *AS, Spain*
- **Patrick BARCLAY,** *London Evening Standard*
- **Jorge BARRAZA,** *Revista Conmebol, Argentina*
- **Sam BECKWITH,** *World Soccer, Czech Rep*
- **Colin BENJAMIN,** *journalist, Trinidad & Tobago*
- **Beppe BERGOMI,** *Sky Italia, Italy*
- **Nick BIDWELL,** *World Soccer, Germany*
- **Alexander BOBROV,** *Sport Express, Russia*
- **Zbigniew BONIEK,** *FA president, Poland*
- **Ernst BOUWES,** *journalist, Holland*
- **Dan BRENNAN,** *World Soccer, Scotland*
- **Liam BUCKLEY,** *manager St Patrick's, Rep Ireland*
- **Bogdan BUGA,** *journalist, Ukraine*
- **Kalusha BWALYA,** *FA president, Zambia*
- **Carlos CARPIO,** *Marca, Spain*
- **Gabriel CAZENAVE,** *ABC, Paraguay*
- **Michael CHURCH,** *World Soccer, Hong Kong*
- **Francois COLIN,** *De Standaard, Belgium*
- **Mike COLLETT,** *Reuters, England*
- **Dez CORKHILL,** *Astro Arena, Malaysia*
- **Jon COTTERIL,** *O Globo, Brazil*
- **Sean CREEDON,** *World Soccer, Rep Ireland*
- **Peterjon CRESSWELL,** *World Soccer, Hungary*
- **Steve DARBY,** *coach/ESPN pundit, Malaysia*
- **Vicente DATTOLI,** *Jornal de Brasilia, Brazil*
- **Jan Hermen DE BRUIJN,** *Elf Voetbal, Holland*
- **Jaap DE GROOT,** *De Telegraaf, Holland*
- **Martin DEL PALACIO LANGER,** *World Soccer, Mexico*
- **Jose Manuel DELGADO,** *A Bola, Portugal*
- **Mehmet DEMIRCAN,** *Fanatik, Turkey*
- **Klaas-Jan DROPPERT,** *World Soccer, Holland*
- **Jerzy DUDEK,** *former international, Poland*
- **John DUERDEN,** *World Soccer, South Korea*
- **Christian EICHLER,** *FAZ, Germany*
- **Adel FERDOWSIPOUR,** *World Soccer, Iran*
- **Johanna GARA,** *TV4, Sweden*
- **Sebastian GARCIA,** *journalist, Argentina*
- **Philippe GERMAIN,** *World Soccer, Canada*
- **Brian GLANVILLE,** *World Soccer, England*
- **Mark GLEESON,** *World Soccer, South Africa*
- **Miron GOIHMAN,** *World Soccer, Moldova*
- **Rex GOWAR,** *Reuters, Argentina*
- **Victor GUSEV,** *World Soccer, Russia*
- **Simon HILL,** *Fox Sports, Australia*
- **Jim HOLDEN,** *World Soccer, England*
- **Aleksandar HOLIGA,** *journalist, Croatia*
- **Brian HOMEWOOD,** *World Soccer, Switzerland*
- **Alexander ISCHENKO,** *TV pundit, Ukraine*
- **Sasa IBRULJ,** *World Soccer, Bosnia*
- **Ivan KALASHNIKOV,** *sports.ru, Russia*
- **Tor-Kristian KARLSSON,** *scout/coach, Norway*
- **Ali KHALED,** *The National, UAE*
- **Giannis KYRIAKIS,** *Espresso/Democratia, Greece*
- **Kumi KINOHARA,** *journalist, Japan*
- **Sergey KIRYAKOV,** *former international, Russia*
- **Dariusz KUROWSKI,** *World Soccer, Poland*
- **Jens KIRSCHNECK,** *11 Freunde, Germany*
- **Roy KITSON,** *World Soccer, Northern Ireland*
- **Leon KRAUZE,** *Univision, United States*
- **Julien LAURENS,** *Le Parisien, France*
- **Kenny LAURIE,** *Sport 360, UAE*
- **Lasana LIBURD,** *World Soccer, Trinidad & Tobago*
- **Fabio LICARI,** *Gazzetta della Sport, Italy*
- **Sid LOWE,** *World Soccer, Spain*
- **Abdulrahman MAGDY,** *TV presenter, Egypt*
- **Jimmy MAGEE,** *RTE, Rep Ireland*
- **Sam MATTERFACE,** *TALKsport, England*
- **Pierre MATURANA,** *So Foot, France*
- **MIDO,** *former international, Egypt*
- **Glenn MOORE,** *The Independent, England*
- **Manfred MUNCHRATH,** *Kicker, Germany*
- **Les MURRAY,** *SBS, Australia*
- **Fred MUSISI,** *journalist, Uganda,*
- **Andres MUST,** *World Soccer, Estonia*
- **Vladimir NOVAK,** *World Soccer, Serbia*
- **Sugrd ODEGAARD,** *World Soccer, Norway*
- **Oluwashina OKELEJI,** *BBC World Service, Nigeria*
- **Guy OLIVER,** *Oliver's Almanack, England*
- **Yoshiyuki OSUMI,** *journalist, Japan*
- **Michael OTI ADJEI,** *journalist, Ghana*
- **Yazid OUAHIB,** *El Watan, Algeria*
- **Dejan PANIC,** *Dan, Montenegro*
- **Jean-Pierre PAPIN,** *former international, France*
- **Rumen PAYTASHEV,** *World Soccer, Bulgaria*
- **Diego Daniel PAZ,** *Diario Diez, Honduras*
- **Alberto PEREIRA MUNOZ,** *Onda Cero, Spain*
- **Michal PETRAK,** *iSport TV, Czech Rep*
- **Pedro PINTO,** *World Soccer, Portugal*
- **Robert PIRES,** *former international, France*
- **Maurizio PIZZOFERRATO,** *Radio Radio, Italy*
- **Mike PLASTOW,** *World Soccer, Japan*
- **Ashok PUROHIT,** *Muscat Daily, Oman*
- **Keir RADNEDGE,** *World Soccer, England*
- **Zdravko REIC,** *World Soccer, Croatia*
- **Jefferson RODRIGUES,** *TV globo, Brazil*
- **Emmanuel ROSU,** *World Soccer, Romania*
- **Alexandre RUIZ,** *BeIN Sport, France*
- **Ben RYCROFT,** *canadiansoccernews.com, Canada*
- **Tom SAINTFIET,** *coach, Malawi*
- **Andrew SMITH,** *Scotsman, Scotland*
- **Matt SPIRO,** *BeIN Sport, France*
- **Manos STARAMOPOULOS,** *Eleftheros Typos, Greece*
- **Milorad STOJMANOVSKI,** *World Soccer, Macedonia*
- **Jacques SYS,** *Foot/Sport, Belgium*
- **Rok TAMSE,** *Slovenske Novice, Slovenia*
- **Masahiko TEJIMA,** *World Soccer Digest, Japan*
- **Troels Bager THOGERSEN,** *Tipsbladet, Denmark*
- **Taketsugu TOBE,** *Kyodo News, Japan*
- **Cees VAN CUILENBORG,** *European Sports Media, Holland*
- **Colin UDOH,** *journalist, Nigeria*
- **Grant WAHL,** *Sports Illustrated, United States*
- **Tom WILLIAMS,** *AFP, England*
- **Richard WILSON,** *The Herald, Scotland*
- **Wolfgang WINHEIM,** *Kurier, Austria*
- **Mike WOITALA,** *Soccer America, United States*
- **Oleg ZADERNOVSKY,** *World Soccer, Ukraine*

Full details on how the panel voted, visit worldsoccer.com/features/2013 awards

ZAHIR BELOUNIS

JOURNEYMAN MIDFIELDER, QATAR

Highlighting human rights abuses by the 2022 World Cup hosts

Zahir Belounis emerged from the arrivals terminal at Charles de Gaulle airport into a blinding sea of flashbulbs, a forest of microphones and, finally, into the open arms of his mother. It was the first time that the French footballer had ever been welcomed like a returning superstar, to a media scrum and the tears of loved ones. Except Belounis wasn't returning as a superstar for his exploits on the pitch. He was returning after effectively being kept hostage off it.

The 33-year-old defensive midfielder had enjoyed a modest career, playing in the lower reaches of the French league, never quite cracking the big time. But in 2010 he was offered a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to move to Qatar and play for El Jaish, the army's football club who were then in the second tier. The contract was bigger than any he had been offered in his life. A host of big-name players had made the journey east over the years – including Marcel Desailly and Frank Leboeuf – so why not Belounis?

But Belounis' decision to chase his dream would turn in to a nightmare. A contract dispute with his club saw him trapped in Qatar's arcane immigration system and prevented from leaving the country. He was trapped there for more than 18 months.

In May, Belounis' plight came to light in the international press. He had become a victim of Qatar's notorious kafala system, a form of sponsorship that ties all employees to their employer. He alleged that his wages hadn't been paid for two years. When he went to the courts to seek redress he was slapped with an effective travel ban and told by the club, he alleges, that he would only be allowed to leave the country if he dropped his case.

It is impossible in Qatar to get an exit visa without your employer's say so. Kafala has long been controversial across the Persian Gulf, where it is used in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, among others. Human rights groups such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have denounced the system as little more than a form of modern-day slavery that allows for the exploitation of millions of low-wage migrant workers from India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh who are carrying the weight of Qatar's rapid development on their shoulders.

There are 1.3million migrant workers in Qatar's construction sector alone. Every report released by human rights groups about kafala details passport confiscations, appalling housing conditions, non-payment of wages, high suicide rates and deaths due to poor health and safety. A newspaper report on one Qatari construction site detailed how dozens of Nepalese workers had died this summer after working in heat that regularly tops 50 degrees Celsius.

The plight of migrant workers in the Gulf has been raised before, but little has changed. But Qatar's victory in the race to host the 2022 World Cup finals focused a new light of scrutiny on the Emirate. People who would have skipped over a story about the misery that kafala brings to millions in the Middle East were interested in one about how the World Cup would likely be built by a system described as modern-day slavery.

And it was Belounis and his ordeal in Qatar that has arguably done more than any single case to raise the issue of kafala and forcing the reform of a brutal and unfair system.

Emotional moment... Belounis is greeted by his mother on his arrival back in France

Wages stopped

Things began well for Belounis in his first season at El Jaish. He helped them win promotion and also represented Qatar at the Military World Cup. He was given citizenship so that he could compete under the Qatari flag. But when he returned, his Qatari passport was quickly taken back and he was loaned out to a second division club. Despite Belounis' five-year contract, his El Jaish wages stopped and his legal problems began. His case was even taken up by French president Francois Hollande who met him in the summer of 2013.

Still, nothing was resolved and, in the end, Belounis says the Qataris only gave him an exit visa after he signed a document renouncing his claim for the unpaid wages. By that point he had already contemplated a hunger strike and suicide. He signed but was not allowed to leave until, finally, he received a phone call saying he had to go. Quickly.

"Someone called me and said: 'Tomorrow, you leave. You have 24 hours'," he recalled. "I just took my wife and two daughters and ran to the airport. I was so happy."

Belounis now has to rebuild his life. He is, according to his brother, suffering from severe depression. He has no club and no job. He hasn't played competitively in two years but will pursue the Qataris for his unpaid wages through the French courts.

"What they did to me was blackmail," Belounis said. "For my club the money is

Photo: A Gelebart/20 Minutes/Sipa/Rex

Nightmare ordeal...Belounis pictured on his return to France after being prevented from leaving Qatar for 18 months

nothing. For me it would change my life. I have lost everything. I need to start my life again and find a job."

The case has been hugely embarrassing for FIFA, who declined to help in any way, and Qatar. In the wake of a slew of stories regarding the appalling treatment of migrant workers in the country, the Qatar 2022 Supreme Committee released a so-called "Workers' Charter" designed to ensure that working standards in all World Cup projects would be met.

"Qatar is developing at a staggering pace and the good thing about the World Cup is that it shines some light on these issues. They were there long before," said Nasser Al Khater, spokesperson for the Qatar 2022 Supreme Committee. "Our standards will be better than the minimum standards. We will put standards of enforcement in place that any non-governmental organisation will be happy with."

Yet the Belounis case proved that this isn't enough. If seven months of negative coverage in the international media and a visit from the French president can't secure an equitable solution to a labour dispute, what hope is there for a Nepalese worker trapped in a similar situation?

> "I didn't sleep or eat, so I lost six kilos in weight. I was depressed"
>
> Belounis on his ordeal

Equally appalled

Despite his ordeal, Belounis still believes Qatar can host a great World Cup. He doesn't tar all Qataris with the same brush. Many, he said, were equally as appalled at his employer's actions. One Qatari even paid for his family to stay in a hotel in his final weeks after he had sold all his furniture.

"There are two things they have to see," said Belounis of the Qatari authorities. "With my situation there are people that will abuse the system. And there are some international companies that abuse as well. The government has to be harder on the abusers."

Groups like the International Trade Union Confederation, and other players who have experienced similar disputes in Qatar – such as former Morocco international Abdeslam Ouaddou – have called for Qatar to be stripped of the 2022 World Cup over their record on labour rights. But that is far too simplistic. The only reason the issue of kafala is being discussed and potentially reformed is because of the World Cup and, in part, because of Zahir Belounis' vocal campaign against his treatment.

He returns now to France to an unclear future. But at least he has returned. "[My mother] was the first person I saw," he said of his arrival back in Europe. "I was so happy to see her, you cannot imagine. She just said: 'I love you, I love you'."

James Montague

MOMENT OF 2013

In November, the 33-year-old was finally given an exit visa to leave Qatar. After a pay dispute with his club side, El Jaish, he had spent two years trying to return to France. He was eventually allowed home after dropping his claim for the non-payment of wages.

MARCELLO LIPPI

GUANGZHOU EVERGRANDE COACH

Triumphant on two continents

When the Italian replaced the locally well-respected coach Lee Jang-soo at Guangzhou Evergrande in May 2012, the club's fans could have been forgiven for wondering whether such a move was really necessary.

Although nowhere near as internationally famous as his replacement, the South Korean was extremely popular, having led the club to promotion in 2010 and the Chinese Super League title in 2011, both by huge margins. By the time he was fired midway through the 2012 season, Lee's side were again top of the league and had just made it to the knockout stage of the AFC Champions League in their debut campaign.

> "I am very satisfied with the career I have had up to now. However, a career is not always full of success and there have been many disappointments at the same time"
>
> Marcello Lippi

Initially, at least, Lippi didn't seem to offer anything special. By the end of 2012, Guangzhou had won the league by a single point and crashed out of the Champions League, the competition that the club's big-spending real estate backers Evergrande – who have spent over £40million on such talents as Dario Conca, Elkeson, Muriqui and most of China's national team – really wanted.

But in 2013 the supporters finally realised what it was that made the new boss special. While Lee sometimes struggled to handle the foreign stars – Conca was banned for nine games in 2012 for criticising the coach on social media – Lippi had the Argentinian playing out of his skin.

However, it was with the Chinese players that Lippi has had the biggest influence. Zheng Zhi, once a midfielder with Charlton Athletic and Celtic, became a completely different player under the Italian. Calm and composed, he was happy to drop back from midfield to play as an auxiliary centre-back one minute, then popping up near the opposition penalty area to nip a counter-attack in the bud the next. Zhang Linpeng – called "our Ramos" by Lippi – has developed into a classy full-back, while once-inconsistent striker Gao Lin is more hit than miss these days.

The high life...Lippi is thrown into the air by his Guangzhou Evergrande players after their AFC Champions League victory

On the boil

The more time Lippi spent on the training pitch, the more comfortable his side became in moving between 4-3-3, 4-2-3-1 and 3-5-2 in a seamless fashion rarely seen in Asia. Lippi rotated intelligently and ensured that his team was on the boil when the big games came around.

Guangzhou even managed to do what few other teams in Asia had managed before: win at home, easily, and do the same on the continent.

Korean and Japanese teams have traditionally dominated the AFC Champions League, but most winners saw their domestic form suffer. Urawa Red Diamonds were so exhausted after their 2007 continental triumph they let a 10-point lead in the J.League disappear with just five games remaining. Seoul, beaten by Guangzhou on away goals in the 2013 Final, were in the Korean title race before the latter stages of the Asian competition became too much. Guangzhou, meanwhile, were head and shoulders above the rest of the competition both at home and abroad as they took continental and domestic honours.

Just five minutes away from the club's Tianhe Stadium, where Lippi always gets the biggest cheer when the teams are announced, is the coach's favourite Italian restaurant, situated on the third floor of one of the many international hotels. It is a fine reminder of home for a man who has brought an intelligent taste of Italian football to China and Asia.

John Duerden

MOMENT OF 2013

A 1-1 draw at home to Seoul in the Final saw Guangzhou Evergrande become only the second Chinese side to win the competition and Lippi make history as the only coach to have won both the UEFA Champions League and the AFC Champions League.

STEPHEN KESHI

NIGERIA COACH

'Big boss' takes Africa's top prize

Stephen Keshi went into the African Nations Cup finals in January 2013 looking to lay down a cushion for a potential fall.

On arrival in Johannesburg he told the media that his new-look Nigeria, devoid of several key names and unusually with six home-based players included, was a team in transition, a new selection being groomed for a serious tilt at World Cup glory five years down the line. "This is the team for Russia in 2018," he insisted.

Three weeks later, though, Nigeria were celebrating on the pitch at Soccer City, having overcome even their own doubts to win the tournament with a 1-0 triumph over Burkina Faso.

They had been far from convincing in the group phase and needed two late penalties against Ethiopia to book a quarter-final place. But then they went up a gear and beat top-ranked Ivory Coast in the last eight, saw off Mali in the semi-final and then the Burkinabe in the Final, making Keshi only the second man to win Africa's top footballing prize as both a player and coach.

It was only the third Nations Cup triumph for Africa's most populous country, who for once had gone into the tournament without a crushing burden of blind expectation on their shoulders.

Keshi's keen eye for talent and his firm grip on the team has since seen Nigeria also book a 2014 World Cup finals place, albeit after coming through a relatively modest group with Kenya, Malawi and Namibia, and a play-off tie with Ethiopia.

Although they struggled in last summer's Confederations Cup in Brazil, this is a team that is likely to be a lot better when the real tournament comes around in June.

Super Eagle...Keshi celebrates after beating Ivory Coast in the African Nations Cup quarter-finals

MOMENT OF 2013

A first-half goal from Sunday Mba gave Nigeria victory over Burkina Faso in the African Nations Cup Final and saw Keshi follow in the footsteps of Egypt's Mahmoud El Gohary as only the second man to win the tournament as a player and a coach.

Major figure

"Big Boss", as Keshi was known in his playing days, has always been a major figure in the Nigerian game. He was the first significant export to European club football from a country which has become a prodigious producer of players ever since, and was a strong leader of a successful side, culminating in a maiden World Cup appearance at USA 94.

Later he served as assistant coach and was always earmarked for the Super Eagles' top job.

He is well versed with the vagaries of Nigerian footballing intrigue: the money hassles, the disorganised and the rampant politicking. To survive this maelstrom is testimony to his winning mentality.

> Keshi was the first black African coach to win the African Nations Cup for 21 years

Keshi took the first year and more than 10 matches of his tenure to settle on his plans. His decision to axe the likes of Taye Taiwo, Yakubu Aiyegbeni and, most controversially, Peter Odemwingie was heavily criticised at first, but quickly forgotten in the heady celebrations that followed the unexpected success.

Surprisingly though, the adulation was not universal and Keshi has had to deal with in-fighting at the Nigerian Football Federation that saw several staff members axed or their salaries reduced in a petty political play.

Mark Gleeson

MOHAMED ABOUTRIKA

AL AHLY AND EGYPT

African great prepares to end remarkable career

Tribute...Aboutrika salutes Al Ahly fans after being substituted in the African Champions League Final

Policemen, ultras, journalists, politicians, soldiers and players; every Egyptian in the Arab Contractors Stadium in Cairo loves Mohamed Aboutrika.

It is stoppage time in the second leg of the 2013 African Champions League Final. Al Ahly are 2-0 up against Orlando Pirates and heading for a record eighth continental title.

Aboutrika, Al Ahly's mercurial, bow-legged midfield genius has already made the tie safe. His stunning free-kick in the first leg in South Africa gave Ahly their vital away goal. His close-range strike in Cairo had cemented their title and then he was substituted, mobbed by the bench, by nearby police officers and fans – anyone who could get close enough to touch him – before the referee blew the full-time whistle and marked the end of one of African football's most remarkable careers.

Aboutrika's roll-call of honours alone would place him among the continent's greats: five African Champions League titles, seven Egyptian League wins and two African Nations Cups, among others. Yet he is much more than the greatest player that Ahly and Egypt have ever seen. He is also Al Ahly and Egypt's conscience, a role that has seen him elevated to the status of an untouchable in the Middle East, Africa and beyond.

Ever since signing from Tersana in 2003 Aboutrika has been the driving force of both Al Ahly and Egypt's national team during the most successful era in both their histories. The midfielder has become known as much for his grace, intelligence and social conscience off the pitch as on it. One former coach of Tersana tells of how Aboutrika was offered a big contract to stay but refused, instead signing a deal equal to his team-mates.

> "I have coached great players and he would be up there with any one of them"
>
> Bob Bradley on Aboutrika

He was there in Port Said on February 1, 2012, when 72 Al Ahly fans were killed after a match. He held one of the fans as he died in his arms. Deeply traumatised by what he saw, and with the Egyptian league being cancelled, he initially decided to retire. But Ahly's fans urged him to return and he drove the team to an emotional 2012 Champions League victory in honour of the dead.

His goals were vital in that success, not least his second-half hat-trick against Stade Malien in an earlier round that dragged Ahly back from the brink. During that season he even refused to play an Egyptian Cup match, siding with

MOMENT OF 2013

Playing his last club game on Egyptian soil, Aboutrika scored in the 54th minute to set Al Ahly on their way to a 3-1 aggregate win against Orlando Pirates in the CAF Champions League Final.

Graceful...facing Ghana in the World Cup play-off

Ahly's ultras fan group, the Ahlawy, who vowed to boycott all domestic football until justice for the dead was secured. The club banned him, but he later returned and lifted the title. When he picked up the trophy he wore a T-shirt with the number 72 on the front.

"Blood brother"

American coach Bob Bradley, then in charge of Egypt's national side, was so impressed by Aboutrika's humility and intelligence – he holds a philosophy degree – that he referred to him recently as his "blood brother; he's a good man."

Yet, even at 34, the past year has seen Aboutrika playing some of the best football of his career. He outshone every other midfielder at last year's Club World Cup in Japan and was untouchable in Egypt's 2014 World Cup qualifying campaign. With the league still in chaos in post-revolution Egypt, Aboutrika was loaned out to Bani Yas in the UAE to help prevent Al Ahly from going bankrupt. He helped them to win the Gulf Champions League before returning to lead Ahly to another continental title.

The only disappointment is he will never grace a World Cup finals. Egypt have not qualified since 1990, and play-off defeat by Ghana in November ended any hope Aboutrika had of playing on the greatest stage of all.

Such has been Aboutrika's standing in Egyptian society – he is a devout Muslim who has spoken out against the recent coup that saw the Muslim Brotherhood toppled from power – that his future might lie away from football. But above all, Ahly's no22 will be remembered for being the engine of Egypt's domination of African football.

But there is one last challenge. He will play in the Club World Cup in Morocco, where he is the joint-top overall goalscorer with Lionel Messi.

James Montague

MOYA DODD

FIFA EXCO MEMBER

Australian now leading female voice at FIFA

The FIFA executive committee has included three women since May, with Australian Moya Dodd co-opted at the last congress and joining Burundi's Lydia Nsekera and the under-the-radar Sonia Bien-Aime of Turks & Caicos.

And it is Dodd who has surely taken over the prime role among the trio.

Contrasting fortunes in the corridors of power were evident in November. Just as Nsekera was being ousted as Burundi's FA president, so Dodd was underlining her own up-front credentials by going to Tehran and telling Iran it was time to allow women fans into stadia to watch men's football.

Dodd – lawyer, businesswoman and former international footballer – told Iran's Second International Congress on Football and Science: "We [women] are important consumers of football...many women here have expressed concern that they can't attend live matches.

"Local laws must be respected [but] I'm looking forward to the day when we could, together, attend a top football match in Iran."

Australia may wonder whether its 2022 World Cup bid might have fared better had they benefited from that sort of in-your-face leadership from Dodd. Instead, in December 2010, Australia was the one bidder with no one on the FIFA ExCo.

> "There's a lot of comment about gender but, to me, it's really about doing a good job and working towards the day when gender is not a matter for comment"
>
> Moya Dodd

MOMENT OF 2013

Having been re-elected, unopposed, as vice-president of the AFC, Dodd was then co-opted onto FIFA's ExCo.

Speaking her mind...Dodd at the AFC Congress in Kuala Lumpur

Re-elected unopposed

Dodd had joined the board of Football Federation Australia in 2007. Two years later she was elected as a vice-president of the AFC and, in 2013, she was re-elected unopposed before being co-opted on the FIFA ExCo. She is chair of the AFC women's committee and also serves as the ASEAN zone's female executive committee member.

"The perspective of a player and someone who has loved the game from grass roots up is important in decision-making in football," says Dodd.

"I've been the first woman elected to both Football Federation Australia and the AFC and that, in itself, has taught me what you need to do to win respect and be able to make a contribution in those sorts of environments. Also I believe my background in law and in business brings principled and analytical decision making to the top table in FIFA.

"As a lawyer you learn how to negotiate, which means building consensus around some kind of agreed action. That, too, is important in the world of football because it's amazingly diverse, which is also part of its challenge."

Quite what happens next is uncertain. Dodd's co-opted status within FIFA expires next May, so Sepp Blatter will need to devise a formula to keep her on board. FIFA's ExCo needs more members with the character to go to Iran and "tell it like it is".

Keir Radnedge

DIEGO COSTA

ATLETICO MADRID STRIKER

International custody battle

My choice...Diego Costa sees his international future with Spain rather than his native Brazil

It's a fools' game predicting who will feature in the 2014 World Cup Final, but few would bet against the hosts Brazil facing the holders Spain; the most successful team in World Cup history against the team that has dominated international football since 2008.

For one man, such a Final would mean loyalties being split right down the middle. Atletico Madrid's Diego Costa made his debut for Brazil in March, in friendlies against Italy and Russia, but was overlooked for the Confederations Cup in June, where a competitive game would have tied his international future to the country of his birth.

However, Spain coach Vicente Del Bosque saw an opportunity to pick the 25-year-old for his adopted homeland and called him up for the World Cup qualifiers in October – until the Spanish federation (RFEF) encountered resistance from their Brazilian counterparts and the paperwork was not released on time.

Nevertheless, Del Bosque was keen on Costa making the switch, saying: "He has all the necessary criteria. He has Spanish nationality, he has been here since he was 18, he was formed here [as a footballer], he has not played official games for Brazil.

"Plenty of foreign players have played for Spain. Some see it almost as an attack [on the nation], but he is integrated here. The thing is, no one has talked to him. And if we call him up we are almost, almost obliged to take him to the World Cup. We have to be absolutely sure. It's still in the air."

> "He could be a very valuable member of the squad who can drop deep and push on"
>
> Spain coach Vicente Del Bosque

Despite the confusion, the RFEF announced that Costa had signed a document declaring his intention to play for Spain. An angry Brazil coach Luiz Felipe Scolari responded by saying the player had been "automatically deselected" from playing for Brazil. "He is turning his back on the dream of millions to represent the five-time world champions at the World Cup in Brazil," Scolari lamented.

Costa was subsequently named in the squad for Spain's friendlies against Equatorial Guinea and South Africa in November, but injury prevented him joining up. His next chance to make his Spain debut will be a friendly against Italy in March.

Costa has divided opinion in Spanish football since his arrival in 2007 via Portugal. His aggressive playing style led one pundit to describe him as having "arms like a Swiss Army knife" and his aggression has not always been

MOMENT OF 2013

In May Costa scored the equaliser against Real as Atletico went on to win the Spanish Cup Final 2-1 – their first victory against their Madrid rivals for 25 games, in a run stretching back to 1999. Then, less than five months later, he scored the only goal of the game as Atletico won again at the Bernabeu, this time in La Liga.

Friendly outing...playing for Brazil against Russia

channelled in the right direction. Last season he was sent off for butting David Limbersky of Viktoria Plzen in the Europa League and was banned for four games by UEFA. But Del Bosque has identified a need for a physical presence in attack and feels Costa could be the man to provide it.

His form this season has been exceptional. In October he scored the goal against Real Madrid that took Atletico to joint top of the table, level with Barcelona. By the start of December, he had 15 league goals, second only to Cristiano Ronaldo in the ESM Golden Shoe rankings, as Atletico enjoyed the best start in their history.

It was probably more than just coincidence that this summer was the first time in his journeyman career (Braga, Celta Vigo, Albacete, Valladolid, Rayo Vallecano) that he did not switch clubs. He rejected a move to Liverpool in favour of staying in Madrid and stepping up to fill the shoes of Radamel Falcao, who was sold to Monaco in the close season.

At Atletico, he has followed in an illustrious line of strikers: Falcao, Diego Forlan, Sergio Aguero, Fernando Torres and Christian Vieri, to name just five. And now his form has earned him the chance to play at the World Cup, though in the colours of his adopted Spain rather than his native Brazil.

John Holmesdale

SHEIKH SALMAN

AFC PRESIDENT

New broom in Asia

Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa of Bahrain is in a race against time after having been elected decisively as 10th president of the tormented Asian Football Confederation back in the spring.

After weeks of accusations and counter-accusations, the Manchester United fan shrugged off controversies over his human rights record and the overt support of Asian Olympic leader Sheikh Ahmad Al Fahad Al Sabah to be voted in. He then celebrated a double success after he defeated Hassan Al Thawadi of Qatar by 28 votes to 18 for a seat on the FIFA executive committee.

Logic won out as it would have been nonsensical if the AFC had elected a new president with no access to the top table of the world federation, but the one snag for Salman is that his term of office lasts less than two years before he must fight for re-election in Australia in January 2015.

Tough task...Sheikh Salman is preaching reform

> "We have zero tolerance to match fixing and corruption practices, and we need to make full use of all our tools to fight this phenomenon"
>
> Sheikh Salman

MOMENT OF 2013

Was elected president of the AFC with a two-thirds majority in the first round of voting in Kuala Lumpur. He collected 33 votes as opposed to the seven of Thailand's Worawi Makudi and the six of Yousuf Al Serkal of the United Arab Emirates.

This is because he is only completing the original four-year term to which the disgraced Mohamed Bin Hammam of Qatar was elected in 2011. Bin Hammam was then banned for life by FIFA, first over bribery elections then over misuse of AFC funds.

Salman has acknowledged "a personal duty and moral obligation" to reunite the AFC which has included setting up an ethics system – not before time.

He says: "We need be united, to bring everyone into one path, to look ahead to our goals, to achieve our targets, to get as many things done as possible especially by the year 2015. There are many great things that can be done in two years."

The fight against match fixing – in which the rest of the world perceives south-east Asia as the heart of the problem – is a priority.

Salman says: "We should look carefully at our challenges such as match fixing, which is a disease.

"This problem should not only be tackled from the football side, but also we need good policing and support from the governments – and we should try to create mechanisms to tackle this issue in Asia."

But words need to be backed up by actions and Salman has a lot of work ahead of him to unite intent with effect.

That must include abandoning his preference for organising key strategy meetings on home turf in Bahrain rather than at headquarters in Kuala Lumpur. AFC staff still need to feel the positive presence of the new broom.

Keir Radnedge

NILTON SANTOS

BRAZILIAN WORLD CUP WINNER

More than just a full-back

Successful...Santos won 75 caps for Brazil and played at three World Cup finals

Acrobatic...in action against the Soviet Union at the 1958 World Cup

Nilton Santos was more than just a full-back. The left-back, who died aged 85, won the World Cup with Brazil in 1958 and 1962, and pioneered the role of attacking full-back.

Described by Brian Glanville as "tall, strong, stylish", he famously scored in Brazil's opening game of the 1958 World Cup, a 3-0 win over Austria. After winning the ball deep in his own half, he advanced to the halfway line, where he passed to Jose Altafini. But instead of retreating to his defensive position, as required by the coach, he continued forward, accepted a return ball from Altafini and scored a superb goal with a powerful shot.

His movement forward had provoked an anxious cry from coach Vicente Feola, despairing at the space left behind him. But the coach's complaints quickly turned to applause following the goal. "Crazy, crazy..." Feola moaned, before acknowledging: "Oh, well done!"

That move and goal encapsulated the attacking mindset of Santos. His approach would be copied by full-backs around the world, paving the way for future marauding left-backs such as Junior and Roberto Carlos, and today's Brazilian internationals such as Dani Alves owe a huge debt to him.

"Master Nilton" was born in Rio de Janeiro, the eldest of seven children, and spent his entire career with one club, Botafogo. He had started as an attacker in youth football but the club, noticing his ability to track back, switched him to defence. But his attacking instincts never left him.

> "Nilton Santos was one of the most important figures in the history of Brazilian football"
>
> 2002 World Cup winner Ronaldo

He made his Brazil debut in 1949, winning the first of 75 caps at the Copa America, and was a reserve of the 1950 squad. Bigode was first choice and the absence of substitutes meant Santos did not feature at the tournament. The upside for him was that he was never blamed for Brazil's failure to beat Uruguay in the final match.

By the 1954 finals, he was established in the first XI, but was sent off in the infamous "Battle of Berne", along with Hungary captain Jozsef Bozsik. They had come to blows after a strong tackle on Bozsik by Santos.

He played every game at the 1958 finals, where Brazil played a revolutionary 4-2-4 formation that lent itself to attacking runs by Nilton Santos and his counterpart (no relation) at right-back, Djalma Santos. In the Final, against hosts Sweden, the pair played crucial roles as Brazil, inspired by a teenage Pele, ran out 5-2 winners.

He was an important personality in the squad and had led a delegation of players who lobbied coach Feola to include Garrincha, his mercurial team-mate at Botafogo.

Santos played again at the 1962 finals in Chile, at the age of 37, helping Brazil to retain their title, before retiring in 1964.

Known as the "encyclopedia" of football for his knowledge of the game, he earned little money from football in retirement. Staff and fans of Botafogo stepped in to fund a Rio nursing home when alzheimer's took hold.

"He was one of the most important figures in the history of Brazilian football," said 2002 World Cup winner Ronaldo.

Pele added: "I will be forever grateful to what Nilton did for me.

"He was an outstanding player and I will never forget how he took me under his wing when I was first called up to the *Selecao* at 16 years old. Apart from my father's, Nilton's advice was the most precious I had on a football pitch."

Right-back Djalma Santos died earlier in 2013, leaving only Pele, Mario Zagallo, Zito and defender Bellini still alive from the 1958 World-Cup winning side.

John Holmesdale

OTHERS WHO PASSED AWAY IN 2013

● **Djalma Santos**
1929-2013
World Cup winner with Brazil in 1958 and 1962.

● **Christian Benitez**
1986-2013
Ecuador international, known as "Chucho".

● **Bill Foulkes**
1932-2013
Survived the Munich Air Disaster in 1958.

● **Bruno Metsu**
1954-2013
Led Senegal to the 2002 World Cup quarter-finals.

● **Marek Spilar**
1975-2013
Ex-Slovakia international who took his own life.

● **Brian Greenhoff**
1953-2013
Won the 1977 FA Cup with older brother Jimmy.

● **Bert Trautmann**
1923-2013
Ex-prisoner of war, he was a 1956 FA Cup winner

● **Antoni Ramallets**
1924-2013
Won 17 club trophies in goal for Barcelona.

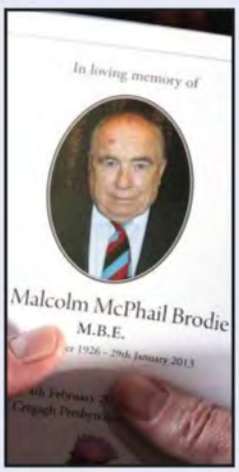
● **Ottmar Walter**
1924-2013
1954 World Cup winner with brother Fritz.

● **Jacques Stockman**
1938-2013
A forward with Anderlecht and Belgium.

● **Gerrie Muhren**
1946-2013
Was a triple European Cup winner with Ajax.

● **Phil Woosnam**
1932-2013
Leading light in the development of the NASL.

● **Tony Grealish**
1956-2013
Brighton and Republic of Ireland midfielder.



● **Malcolm Brodie**
1926-2013
Journalist who covered 14 World Cup finals.

● **Gilmar**
1930-2013
Brazil keeper who played in three World Cups.

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FERNANDO ROIG

"Going down can never be seen as a good thing, but it has been positive in some aspects"

The president of Spanish club Villarreal, who were relegated in 2012, has seen his side thrive back in the top flight this season

Villarreal were sitting in fourth place at the end of November, playing good football, in front of full houses at El Madrigal, while the debt has been cleared and the budget balanced. Was relegation actually good for the club?
Totally. The first thing is the fans; they didn't appreciate what it was to have a first division team in the city. Now they do. Then there's the club. We made mistakes but we've been able to rectify them. We have dropped the budget to a level that is sustainable. We cleared the debts that were outstanding, effectively set the clock to zero and balanced the budget. Then there's Marcelino, who is a very good coach who can take us forward in the next few years. Going down can never be seen as a good thing, but it has been positive in some aspects.

You took some surprising decisions, ones that could best be described as "moral". You turned down a regional-government subsidy; season-ticket holders who became unemployed now watch for free; and ticket prices have come down. Why?
Because I think that given the situation Spain is going through right now it's not right for local government to be subsidising football. Football has to live according to its own means, according to what it can generate.

What did the presidents of other clubs say to you? If they get subsidies, it's easy to imagine them saying: "Are you mad? Don't say that or we'll have to give them up too..."
I imagine one or two might have thought that but no one said anything to me. I'm free to take the decision that I consider the correct one.

And the decision to let unemployed season-ticket holders watch for free...
What we want is to fill the ground. The money in football comes from television; the sentiment, the feeling, comes from the fans. So you have to help the fans to fill the stadium. If you go to games in Germany and England, the stadiums are full. We want the same to happen here. The kick-off times for games are what they are, they do not help, but we still want to fill the stadium. We have 18,000 or 19,000 season-ticket holders. There are few things sadder than seeing an empty stadium.

The money comes from the TV, but Real Madrid and Barcelona's dwarf everyone else. They can take home €140million a year in domestic TV rights; Villarreal will not reach €30m. Will that change? Is there a solution?
Yes. They have to realise that there has to be competition. Madrid and Barcelona are going to win the majority of leagues but I want to achieve a situation in which the number of points they get is not 100 – a figure that is barbaric. It's nicer if Barcelona and Madrid lose four or five games a season rather than one. This season, with Atletico, there are three teams fighting it out; it would be better if there were four, five or six. That would mean more attractive games in a season and that's better for fans...and for the television companies. The only way of doing that is for the games to be more competitive. Madrid and Barcelona have to realise that.

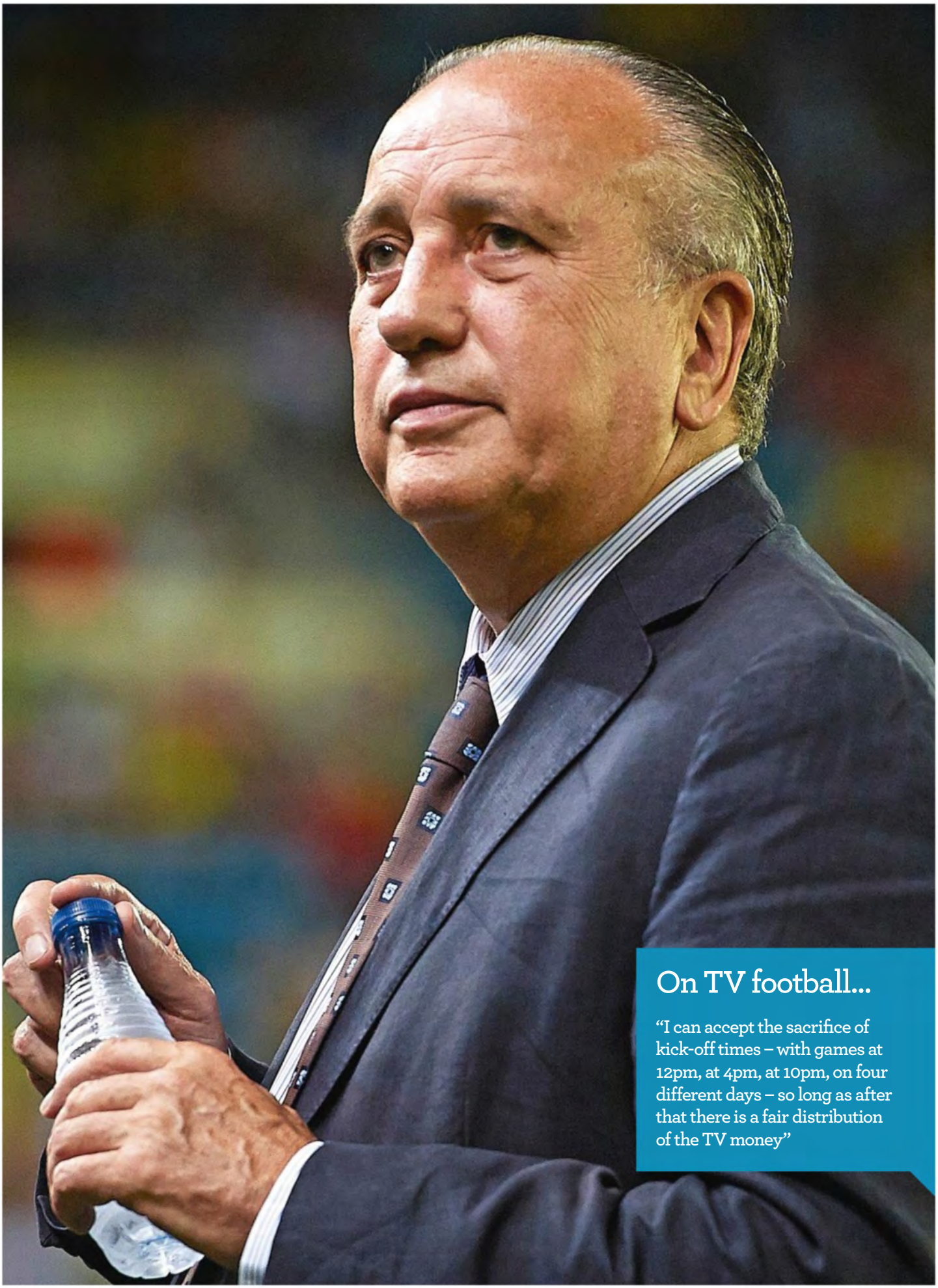
But will they? Can you convince them it is in their best interest? Do Madrid and Barcelona's Champions League defeats last season suggest the lack of competition is damaging them?
Yes. German football is an example of how you can handle the distribution of money better. I don't see the difference between having one Ferrari or two. You can only sit in one at a time. Madrid and Barcelona have to give way a bit. If we negotiate a collective deal then the overall amount will be more, which helps.

And then how should the money be distributed? Should it be equal across the 20 clubs?
I think the best structure is a sliding scale. First we have to sell the rights together, not individually, and at the best possible price. Then we need to distribute the money in a way that respects Madrid and Barcelona. But they have to respect everyone else too. There needs to be a system where the third, fourth and fifth clubs can compete. The third can't be the same as the 18th. It is important that the rest of us, without signing the really big stars, can build teams to compete.

It's not just about money though, is it. Santi Cazorla was at Villarreal from the age of 15 before moving to Arsenal this season. Is he an example of a phenomenon in which the best players, if they want to win things, have to join Madrid or Barcelona or go abroad?
If there's no balance, no real competition, players who want to compete have to go. In Santi's case specifically, when we sold him, we had a need to balance the budget. Right now, we don't have the need to sell any player. If we do sell one it will be because the player wants to go and the buying club pays the money we want. The next Santi Cazorla will not go through obligation. I sold Santi with a pain in my heart and he didn't want to go either, but it was a necessity.

Interview by Sid Lowe

Fernando Roig took over at Villarreal in 1997 and led them into La Liga for the first time in the club's history. He also oversaw a run to the Champions League semi-finals in 2006, a league runners-up spot in 2008 and two Europa League semi-final appearances.



On TV football...

"I can accept the sacrifice of kick-off times – with games at 12pm, at 4pm, at 10pm, on four different days – so long as after that there is a fair distribution of the TV money"

Talentscout

Kostas MITROGLOU

CLUB	Olympiakos
COUNTRY	Greece
POSITION	Forward
AGE	25 (12.03.88)
PREVIOUS CLUBS	Borussia Monchengladbach (Ger), Panionios (on loan), Atromitos (on loan)
CAPS	28 (8 goals)
INTERNATIONAL DEBUT	November 2009, v Ukraine
HONOURS	2013 Greek Superleague, 2009 Greek Superleague, 2008 Greek Superleague, 2013 Greek Cup, 2008 Greek Cup, 2007 Greek Super Cup

With Greece having been hit hard by the global economic crash, and German chancellor Angela Merkel widely blamed for forcing the Athens government to implement eye-watering austerity measures, there is currently much anti-Deutschland sentiment in this part of southern Europe. But don't expect the ill will to extend to the scorer of three of Greece's four goals as Romania were comprehensively seen off in the World Cup play-offs.

A resident of the Rhineland for several years, and a graduate of the MSV Duisburg and Borussia Monchengladbach youth ranks, Mitroglou is just as much a product of the German nursery system as Philipp Lahm, Marco Reus or Thomas Muller. And in common with them he has developed a habit for delivering the goods when it matters most.

Ecstatic to have booked their ticket for only their third World Cup finals, supporters of Greece's national team rightly see no point in worrying about Mitroglou's background. Who cares if his parents decided to swop the northern Hellenic city of Kavala for western Germany when he was little? Or that his mastery of the Greek language is not the best ? The bottom line is his effectiveness in front of goal and he was called "The Executioner" during the 3-1 home win against Romania by radio commentator Georgios Helakis.

> Mitroglou is the first Olympiakos player to score hat-tricks in successive Greek Superleague games

Now 25, Mitroglou's ascension to national-team cult hero has taken some time. Given his senior international debut in 2009 by coach Otto Rehhagel – another German Connection – he initially struggled to make an impact, was not selected for the 2010 World Cup in South Africa and only began to blossom at this level some 18 months ago.

It was worth the wait though and as Greek sports daily *Protathlitis* succinctly put it after the Romania games: "The whole world is at his feet."

Adventurous style

Admirers of his excellent chance conversion rate, adventurous style, strength in the air and anticipation in the box, would also do well to take a good, long look at the various obstacles he has had to overcome in his career as a sign of his determination to push on through adversity.

As a youngster he combined goals galore in youth football with little in the way of end product for the reserves. And on joining Olympiakos in 2007 – a move prompted when he finished as top goalscorer at that year's Euro Under-19 Championship - he had a fight on his hands to gain acceptance. He was rarely used by coach Ernesto Valverde and twice sent out on loan. However, his performances at Atromitos earned him the Greek Player of the Year award in 2012.

Back at Olympiakos last term he proved to be the ideal super sub and, with his dues suitably paid, he finally became an automatic starter this summer. He celebrated his promotion with a deluge of goals domestically and became the first Greek to score a hat-trick in the Champions League with a treble against Anderlecht.

Nick Bidwell

National hero...having returned to his homeland from Germany, the Olympiakos striker's goals are responsible for Greece going to Brazil

Calm...Imbula has impressed Marseille fans since his move

Giannelli IMBULA

CLUB	Marseille
COUNTRY	France
POSITION	Midfielder
AGE	21 (12.09.92)
PREVIOUS CLUB	Guingamp

Categorised during his formative years as a gifted midfield regulator who often lacked dynamism and purpose in the early stages of a game, the France under-21 international has certainly conquered his tardiness since his €7.5million move to Marseille last summer.

OM fans are quick to turn on their own and will ferociously target players who do not live up to expectations, so the Stade Velodrome can chew up and spit out even the most seasoned professionals. But calm, focused and absolutely fearless, Imbula has so far proved to be made to measure for the raw and raging passion of the football-obsessed Mediterranean city.

"He's one of those guys who aren't at all bothered by comments they might hear from the crowd," says his former Guingamp boss, Victor Zvunka, who as a former Marseille player knows exactly what he is talking about.

"It was this mental strength which convinced me to put him in the Guingamp first team when he was barely 17."

Born in Belgium to parents from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Imbula was a resident of the Paris suburb of Argenteuil for more than a decade and trained with capital city outfits Racing Club and Paris Saint-Germain before moving to Guingamp's academy at the age of 11.

While critics like to cite his lack of goals and average aerial ability, the bigger picture is that of a young player who combines the art of the timely interception and ball-winning tackle with fine distribution skills and short, sharp bursts of acceleration with the ball at his feet.

> "You have to be solid in every sense to make an impact at Marseille and this boy fits the bill"
> Ex-OM player Victor Zvunka

Some 15 months ago, an Ajax scout was heard describing the long-legged left-footer as "the best young player of his age group in Europe". And with Chelsea, Arsenal, Monaco, Paris Saint-Germain, Lyon and Atletico Madrid among those who are monitoring his progress, sooner or later Marseille are bound to receive an offer they cannot refuse.

Nick Bidwell

Orjan NYLAND

CLUB	Molde
COUNTRY	Norway
POSITION	Goalkeeper
AGE	23 (10.09.90)
PREVIOUS CLUB	Hodd
HONOURS	2013 Norwegian Cup, 2012 Norwegian Cup

Despite little experience in the Norwegian top flight – he only joined Molde from second tier Hodd in January 2013 – the young keeper is already being compared to Manchester United and Denmark great Peter Schmeichel.

Possessing the same authority and imposing physical mass, his reflexes and agility, combined with a composure under fire and strong hands, all add up to one very impressive package.

However, what truly sets Nyland apart is his flair for decisiveness on the important occasion. Without his interventions Hodd would never have won the Norwegian Cup in 2012, and he retained the trophy with new club Molde in November 2013 with a 4-2 victory over Rosenborg in the Final. Last summer he pulled out all the stops as Norway reached the semi-finals of the Euro Under-21s and also secured a place in the team of the tournament.

"Orjan is a match-winner type of huge potential," gushes Per Joar Hansen, who is a former coach of Norway's under-21 side. "He has the right mental strength, the charisma and an incredible will-to-win."

Nick Bidwell

Inspirational...Nyland's performances at the Euro Under-21s in 2013 saw him named in the team of the tournament

Spirit of Bielsa lives on

Jonathan Wilson explains why Chile only know one way to play

Eye opener...Sanchez (in red) scores his, and Chile's, second goal against England, leaving defender Chris Smalling and keeper Fraser Forster helpless

Unless you count implosions and needless red cards at key moments, Chilean football did not have a national footballing identity. But that all changed when Marcelo Bielsa took charge of the national side in 2007.

The man known as "*El Loco*" made Chile one of the most watchable teams at the 2010 World Cup – as their dynamism, high line and relentless passing made them stand out at a generally drab tournament – even if it is a surprise to go back and realise they only actually won two games.

But Bielsa didn't just give Chile a good World Cup; he offered the country a vision of a way of playing that they could call their own. And when results in qualifying for 2014 began to stutter under Claudio Borghi, at least part of the nation's discontent was rooted in the fact that he had edged the style away from "*bielsisme*".

To rectify the problem, the Chilean Football Federation did the logical thing and turned to Jorge Sampaoli – a third Argentinian coach in a row, but one who had won three successive Chilean titles with Universidad de Chile, and the Sudamericana Cup, playing in an overtly "*bielsista*" way.

Thanks to his influence – and that of Bielsa's former assistant Eduardo Berizzo, the coach of O'Higgins – the style of the national team percolated through to the league. That is vital, not merely in laying down "*bielsista*" roots, but also to give young Chilean players a grounding in those methods before they reach the national team.

> "We will not allow ourselves to be modified by our opponents...we will go '*mano a mano*' against anyone"
>
> Chile coach Jorge Sampaoli

One of the problems national coaches face is in trying to find a common style of play, in an impossibly short period of time, among players who could conceivably be playing in 11 different ways for 11 different club sides. The best national teams are often based

Visionary...Bielsa changed Chile's style

on one or two clubs (as Spain are largely drawn from Real Madrid and Barcelona, and Germany from Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund), so if there is a general adoption of "*bielsista*" principles in the league it makes the process of assimilation much easier for the national boss. For example, something similar happened when Egil Olsen was Norway's national coach in the 90s and there was a widespread adoption of radical zonal defence in the Norwegian league.

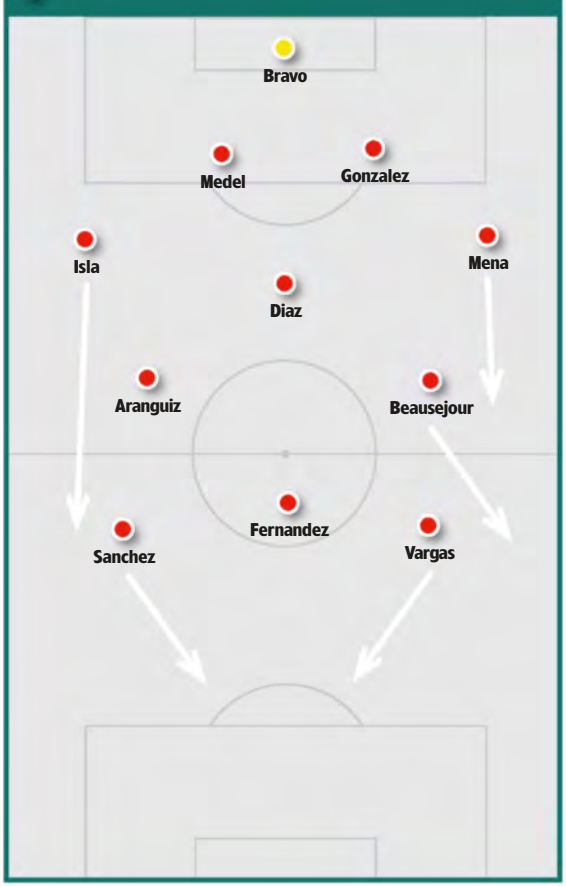
Sampaoli is a self-professed Bielsa disciple. Where others such as Pep Guardiola, Mauricio Pochettino and Gerardo Martino have generally taken elements of the Bielsa style, and merged them with more pragmatic strands, Sampaoli is as close to "*El Loco*" as they come from a tactical point of view.

When he replaced Borghi, the first thing he did was fly to Europe to persuade a number of players who had become disaffected to return to the fold. David Pizarro ended his international retirement, Arturo Vidal and Jorge Valdivia were forgiven for having turned up drunk to training after overindulging at a baptism and Eduardo Vargas, a bit-part player at Napoli, was rehabilitated under the man who had made him a star at "La U".

Tactically, Sampaoli's approach, at least in terms of formation, could come straight from the notebooks of Louis van Gaal: if the opposition play with a front two, counter them with three central defenders; if they play a lone striker, then use two central defenders.

High stakes...Chile coach Sampaoli, a Bielsa disciple, has maintained his mentor's tactical nous at the national team's helm

CHILE LINE-UP v ENGLAND, 15.11.13



Buzzing in

In seven qualifiers under Sampaoli, Chile played a back three twice and a back four on five occasions. Against England, at Wembley in November, it was a back four, with Eduardo Mena and Mauricio Isla tearing forward from full-back, with cover provided by Marcelo Diaz sitting deep in central midfield. Diaz was supported by Charles Aranguiz, with Jean Beausejour in an unusual role to the left, shuttling between midfield and a left-wing berth, and so providing space for Vargas, who naturally pulls out to that flank and cuts infield. That then allows Alexis Sanchez to drift in from the right, with Matias Fernandez acting as an orthodox No 10. The effect is to create a central attacking vacuum, with players buzzing in from all sides.

That game at Wembley continued the positive trend for Chile. Although they lost their first qualifier under Sampaoli, away to Peru, they took 16 points from the next six games (and were 3-0 up away to Colombia in the one game they didn't win). The clear sense of purpose, the clear understanding of a general plan, were clear as Chile ripped in to a tentative England. The pace at which they got men forward was extraordinary and with better finishing they might have had two or three more goals from counter-attacks.

Of course it was only a friendly, and it was against an England team featuring several fringe players, so the usefulness of the game as a barometer is limited. But two things did stand out. One is Sampaoli's ambition. He chose his side's friendlies because he wanted to test Chile against major nations, and the Tuesday after the game at Wembley his side lost 2-1 to Brazil in Toronto, undone by having to make two substitutions in the opening quarter.

Shuttle duties...Beausejour

He has also vowed to attack anybody and everybody. He did that at Wembley and England looked bewildered to find international opponents playing with such pace and desire.

As Sampaoli explains: "Our idea is to surprise opponents who are used to having opponents play against them in a certain way." WS

Keir Radnedge

THE INSIDER

The expert view on events off the pitch

Pride and prejudice in Qatar

The case of Zahir Belounis has highlighted the challenges facing the 2022 World Cup hosts

Relief...Belounis talks to the media after being "freed' by his Qatari club

Now Zahir Belounis (see *People of the Year*, page 58) is safely back in France, land of his birth though not his home, it's easier to cast a less-cluttered perspective over the tortuous ironies of FIFA's award to Qatar of the 2022 World Cup finals. It's been a rude awakening on both sides.

FIFA's ExCo, as constituted in December 2010, had little idea and no concerns about the complexities engendered by the award. Similarly, the ruling elite of Qatar were ignorant of the inevitable consequences of winning.

As has been exposed, the commanding clique within the ExCo comprised too many whose concerns were short-term political and financial gain. The Qataris, with a promotional budget beyond all the other bidders combined, bought into the game with military precision. If there was anything underhand then no one has yet raised a sniff of it.

Bidding – be it for World Cups, Olympic Games or federation presidencies – is a murky game. Everyone plays by the same rules and pushes the frontiers. Just as the Qataris used their financial armoury to land 2022, so Russia used the full power of all its state agencies to get 2018. If Vladimir Putin could secure the 2014 Winter Olympics for Sochi, a Black Sea resort with no sporting tradition or facilities, then securing the World Cup was comparative child's play.

No one disputes FIFA's suicidal decision to run two bids simultaneously facilitated political wheeler-dealing between Qatar and Spain/Portugal (with their close ties into Latin America). Spain/Portugal lost, but the ExCo did not know the 2018 result when it voted, minutes later, for 2022, and Qatar benefited from electoral ignorance.

> The Qatar regime has compromised over workers' rights at World Cup projects. But Hassan Al Thawadi, the Qatar bid's CEO, knows this will not be enough

FIFA president Sepp Blatter is believed to have favoured the United States bid, so he can take a happily detached view of the consequent mess. Hence he fusses around Qatar 2022 like a nanny clearing up after the naughty children have gone to bed.

The naughty children either paid no heed to the cautions of the technical report or were content to accept Qatar's air-cooled vision.

Within days of the vote, Michel Platini began playing his own long game, demanding a winter switch – which may yet backfire on him within UEFA – and panicking half of the remaining ExCo, including Michel D'Hooghe, head of FIFA's medical committee, and Jiri Dvorak, the chief medical officer.

D'Hooghe and Dvorak never need a second invitation to throw the health frighteners at an issue, from heat to headscarves. Yet both Platini and Karl-Heinz Rummenigge have pointed out that they were expected to play in the midday heat – and at altitude – at the World Cup in Mexico in 1986 "and no one worried about our health then". Indeed, the quality of football at that tournament was far superior to the standard at the last two, in Germany in 2006 and South Africa in 2010.

Once the health genie was out of the bottle, stuffing it back in was impossible. So we now have a consultation which may well decide that April/May is the only alternate option which does not risk dropping FIFA into a financial, commercial, political, administrative and structural black hole.

The International Olympic Committee – not to mention Fox TV – has blocked off January/February, while November/December threatens league chaos in almost every geographical zone, not to mention the winter sports lobby and NFL coverage in the US.

Blatter may reflect that the only positive outcome of double-bidding was the unplanned exposure of the machinations of Warner, Bin Hammam and co. Thus a mostly new ExCo has been left to pick up the pieces.

International stardom

The gas-rich Gulf state of Qatar is far from alone in using sport as a short cut to international stardom and a positive, fun-loving image. Neighbouring United Arab Emirates, as well as Bahrain and Azerbaijan, do likewise. But buying friends has its risks.

Putting up a multi-zillion investment to import the week-long circus of an

Health concerns...Dvorak (left) and D'Hooghe

international tennis or golf event is very different to the worldwide focus attached to hosting a World Cup or Olympic Games. The worldwide magnetism of these two is such that human-rights standards come as standard fittings, not optional extras.

The former Emir – who abdicated in June, leaving his son with this fraught legacy – doubtless thought that Qatar's fabulous wealth could "buy in" the World Cup rather like the latest Ferrari. But the western-educated bid team found itself forced to provide guarantees on issues such as alcohol zones and visa freedom, which seriously worried certain cultural and religious wings of the ruling elite.

A re-signed truce has thus existed out of sight, within Qatar, between rulers and organisers ever since December 2010. The tensions have escalated. Why wasn't money enough? The question

Hot...Rummenigge (in white) in action for West Germany against Morocco at Mexico 86

illustrates lack of internal comprehension about what Qatar was letting itself in for.

Complaints from the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) about the conditions endured by immigrant construction workers were ignored. After all, no one had worried when Dubai's architectural jigsaw puzzle was being thrown up and the A-list celebrity resorts, luxury hotels and exclusive retail franchises were falling over themselves to plant their names on a slice of desert.

Qatar's hosting of the World Cup has exposed the state, its governance, politics, culture and religious standards to international judgment against a yardstick of progressive, western-decreed rules and regulations.

An example of the silent conflict within Qatar has come with its reaction to the workers' rights issue. The ITUC could be brushed off, but once the issue had been picked up by the media, modern technology sent a high-profile insight into the iniquities around the global village so fast it hit the Qataris on the back of the head while they were looking the other way.

Top marks to Blatter, incidentally, who came down emphatically on the need for Qatar to change its ways.

This is something new for Qatar. The regime is not used to being pushed around. The Supreme Committee, seeking a balance between FIFA and its own conservatives, has devised the compromise of a workers' rights system for World Cup projects. But Hassan Al Thawadi, the Qatar bid's CEO, knows, even if he dare not admit it, that this will not be enough.

Voluble critics

The international laser beam is focused on all of Qatar's construction projects and everything will have to change. If not, the many voluble critics of the original award will use workers' rights as a stick with which to keep on beating the new Emir and his advisers.

Fear of conceding defeat here is, surely, one of the reasons the Qataris stalled for so long over the Zahir Belounis affair.

Let's be clear about Belounis. He had no footballing pedigree of any significance in France and it remains unclear whether he went out to Qatar, to a second division army club, as soldier or footballer. Doubtless he went for the money, which is perfectly proper. He took the Arab shilling to such an extent that he settled there, his two children were born there and he accepted Qatari citizenship to play for his adopted homeland in the World Military Games in Rio de Janeiro in 2011.

Somewhere down the line it all went wrong for reasons which remain a mystery. All the evidence suggests his club, El Jaish, thought that transforming from a military club to a "proper" sports outfit allowed them to declare below-standard players redundant. It then relied, disgracefully, on what is clearly a standard dirty trick offered by the

Victory bid...the former Emir of Qatar with the World Cup

Reaping the benefits... night action at the ATP Qatar Open tennis tournament

kafala system – by which migrant workers are effectively tied to their employers, who must agree to their departure from the country – to blackmail him out of their hair.

Whether Belounis was naive in the first instance is debatable, as is whether he should have sought help from FIFA's disputes resolution process rather than the notoriously slow and Kafka-esque civil courts. Certainly, once he had gone down the legal rather than the football route he was on his own.

Belounis was fortunate in having a brother, Mahdi, prepared to fight his corner and mount a vigorous media and social campaign on his behalf.

Here again, the Qataris displayed incomprehension about their exposure. The Supreme Committee is organising a World Cup hosting and the Belounis situation – not to mention the workers' rights issue – illustrated its limitations within the greater Qatar power game.

Out in the wider world, and particularly in western Europe, there remains a xenophobic audience who resent seeing "their" World Cup going to a tiny but super-rich Middle East state. Prejudice, certainly, but real enough. Just as real as Qatari pride. **WS**

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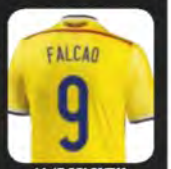

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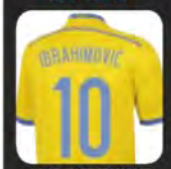

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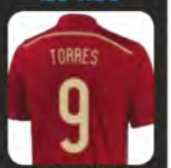

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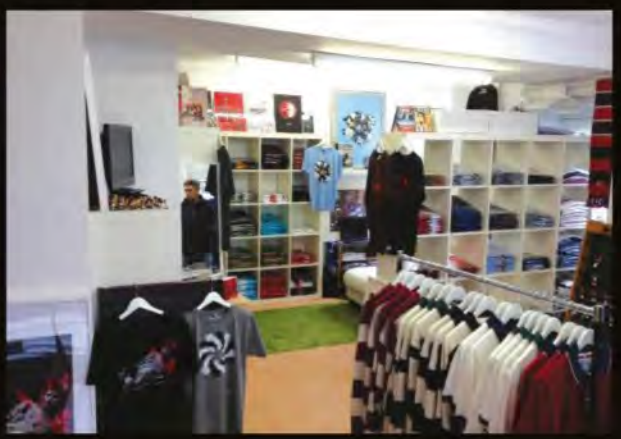

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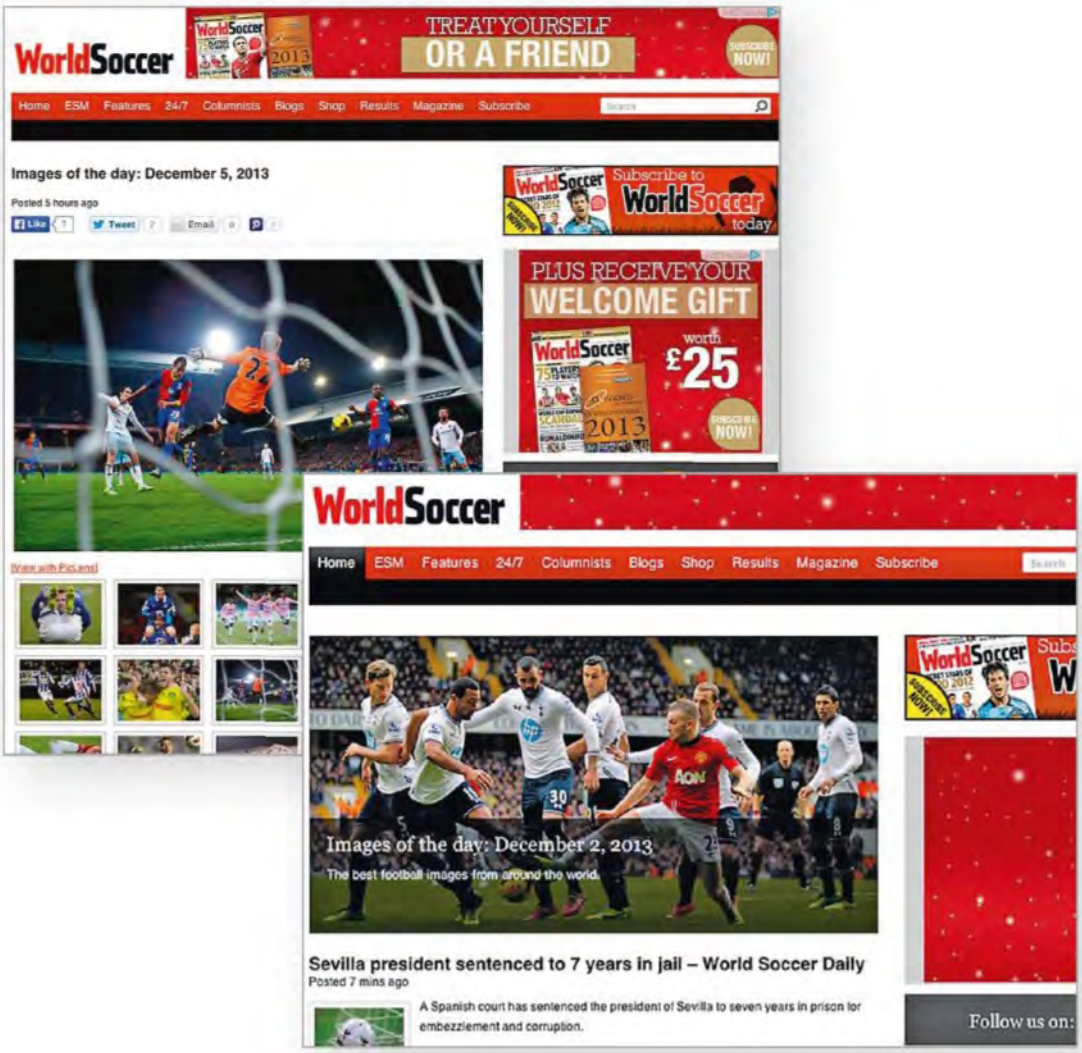

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World Service

The ultimate global news & results section

Close up...Romania's Alexandru Matel keeps an eye on Giorgos Samaras of Greece during their World Cup play-off in Athens

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Champions...Nigeria won the Under-17 World Cup

World Service

Debutant...Roncaglia

ARGENTINA

Defenders step up

Defenders Facundo Roncaglia of Fiorentina and Bordeaux's Lucas Orban both made their international debuts in the 0-0 draw with Ecuador.

AUSTRALIA

Cahill matches Mori

Tim Cahill equalled Damian Mori's all-time record of 29 goals for the national side with a header in the 1-0 win against Costa Rica.

The New York Red Bulls forward got Ange Postecoglou's reign as the new national coach off to a winning start in a match that also saw Lucas Neill wear the captain's armband for a record 61st time.

Robbie Kruse of Bayer Leverkusen is the youngest winner of the Professional Footballers' Australia player of the year award, at 25.

Joint-top scorer...Cahill

BELGIUM

Losing start

Club Brugge full-back Thomas Meunier made his international debut in the 2-0 home defeat by Colombia – which was Belgium's first defeat in 10 games.

Internationals

2014 WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

INTERCONTINENTAL PLAY-OFFS
Asia/South America

1st leg

Nov 13 - Amman
Jordan 0
Uruguay 5 (M Pereira 22, Stuani 42, Lodeiro 69, C Rodriguez 78, Cavani 90+2)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 17,370. **Ref:** Moen (Nor)
Jordan: Shatnawi - Zahran (Bawab 54), Khattab, Aqel, Adnan, Adous, Al Shaqran, Murjan, Al Saify (Al Laham 59), Bani Attiah (Al Khalidi 65), Hayel.
Uruguay: Silva - M Pereira, Lugano, Godin, Caceres, Arevalo, Lodeiro (A Pereira 70), Stuani (Ramirez 70), C Rodriguez, Suarez (Forlan 81), Cavani.

2nd leg

Nov 20 - Montevideo
Uruguay 0
Jordan 0
Att: 62,000. **Ref:** Eriksson (Swe)
Uruguay 5-0 on agg
Uruguay: Silva - M Pereira, Lugano, Godin, Caceres, Arevalo, Lodeiro (Forlan 61), Stuani (Ramirez 61), C Rodriguez, Suarez, Cavani (Hernandez 82).
Jordan: Shatnawi - Zahran, Khattab, Aqel, Al Dmeiri, Adous, Hashhash, Khair (Bani Attiah 60), Adnan, Abdallah Deeb (Al Rawashdeh 87), Hayel (Bawab 90+1).

CONCACAF/Oceania

1st leg

Nov 13 - Mexico City
Mexico 5 (Aguilar 32, R Jimenez 40, Peralta 48, 80, Marquez 84)
New Zealand 1 (James 85)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 99,832. **Ref:** Kassai (Hun)
Mexico: Munoz - Valenzuela, F Rodriguez, Marquez, Aguilar, Pena (Escoboza 64), J C Medina, Layun, Montes (Naelson 60), Peralta (Molina 82), R Jimenez.
New Zealand: Moss - Bertos, Vicelich, Durante, Smith, Lochhead, Brockie (Rojas 58), McGlinchey, Christie (James 54), Wood (Fallon 67), Barbarouses.

2nd leg

Nov 20 - Wellington
New Zealand 2 (James pen 80, Fallon 83)
Mexico 4 (Peralta 14, 29, 33, Pena 87)
HT: 0-3. **Att:** 35,206. **Ref:** Brych (Ger)
Mexico 9-3 on agg
New Zealand: Moss - Smith, Tuiloma (Fenton 50), Durante, Roux, Barbarouses, Rojas (Henderson 73), James, McGlinchey, Brockie, Smeltz (Fallon 54).
Mexico: Munoz - Marquez, Valenzuela, F Rodriguez, Aguilar, Montes (Escoboza 58), Layun, J C Medina, Pena, R Jimenez (De Nigris 68), Peralta (Naelson 76).

● URUGUAY and MEXICO have qualified for the finals

EUROPE SECTION

● 13 finals places available

Group A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
BELGIUM (F)	10	8	2	0	18	4	26
Croatia (QP)	10	5	2	3	12	9	17
Serbia	10	4	2	4	18	11	14
Scotland	10	3	2	5	8	12	11
Wales	10	3	1	6	9	20	10
Macedonia	10	2	1	7	7	16	7

Group B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ITALY (F)	10	6	4	0	19	9	22
Denmark	10	4	4	2	17	12	16
Czech Rep	10	4	3	3	13	9	15
Bulgaria	10	3	4	3	14	9	13
Armenia	10	4	1	5	12	13	13
Malta	10	1	0	9	5	28	3

Group C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
GERMANY (F)	10	9	1	0	36	10	28
Sweden (QP)	10	6	2	2	19	14	20
Austria	10	5	2	3	20	10	17
Rep Ireland	10	4	2	4	16	17	14
Kazakhstan	10	1	2	7	6	21	5
Faroe Islands	10	0	1	9	4	29	1

Group D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
HOLLAND (F)	10	9	1	0	34	5	28
Romania (QP)	10	6	1	3	19	12	19
Hungary	10	5	2	3	21	20	17
Turkey	10	5	1	4	16	9	16
Estonia	10	2	1	7	6	20	7
Andorra	10	0	0	10	0	30	0

Group E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
SWITZ'LAND (F)	10	7	3	0	17	6	24
Iceland (QP)	10	5	2	3	17	15	17
Slovenia	10	5	0	5	14	11	15
Norway	10	3	3	4	10	13	12
Albania	10	3	2	5	9	11	11
Cyprus	10	1	2	7	4	15	5

Group F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
RUSSIA (F)	10	7	1	2	20	5	22
Portugal (QP)	10	6	3	1	20	9	21
Israel	10	3	5	2	19	14	14
Azerbaijan	10	1	6	3	7	11	9
N Ireland	10	1	4	5	9	17	7
Luxembourg	10	1	3	6	7	26	6

Group G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
BOSNIA-H (F)	10	8	1	1	30	6	25
Greece (QP)	10	8	1	1	12	4	25
Slovakia	10	3	4	3	11	10	13
Lithuania	10	3	2	5	9	11	11
Latvia	10	2	2	6	10	20	8
Liechtenstein	10	0	2	8	4	25	2

Group H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ENGLAND (F)	10	6	4	0	31	4	22
Ukraine (QP)	10	6	3	1	28	4	21
Montenegro	10	4	3	3	18	17	15
Poland	10	3	4	3	18	12	13
Moldova	10	3	2	5	12	17	11
San Marino	10	0	0	10	1	54	0

Group I

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
SPAIN (F)	8	6	2	0	14	3	20
France (QP)	8	5	2	1	15	6	17
Finland	8	2	3	3	5	9	9
Georgia	8	1	2	5	3	10	5
Belarus	8	1	1	6	7	16	4

● The 9 group winners qualified for the finals
● The 8 runners-up with the best record[1] (see table below) qualified for the Europe section play-offs

Runners-up table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Greece (QP)	8	6	1	1	9	4	19
France (QP)	8	5	2	1	15	6	17
Portugal (QP)	8	4	3	1	15	8	15
Ukraine (QP)	8	4	3	1	11	4	15
Sweden (QP)	8	4	2	2	15	13	14
Iceland (QP)	8	4	2	2	15	14	14
Romania (QP)	8	4	1	3	11	12	13
Croatia (QP)	8	3	2	3	9	8	11
Denmark	8	2	4	2	9	11	10

[1]Determined by results in the games against the teams finishing 1st, 3rd, 4th and 5th in the respective groups

Europe section play-offs

1st legs

Nov 15 - Piraeus
Greece 3 (Mitroglou 14, 67, Salpigidis 21)
Romania 1 (Stancu 19)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 26,200. **Ref:** Proenca (Por)
Greece: Karnezis - Torosidis, Papastathopoulos, Siovas, Holebas, Maniatis (Karagounis 77), Katsouranis (Samaris 86), Tziolis, Salpigidis, Mitroglou (Gekas 80), Samaras.
Romania: Lobont - Matel, Goian, Gardos, Rat, Bourceanu (Lazar 75), Cocis, Torje (Grozav 75), Stancu, Tanase (Maxim 87), Marica.
Sent off: Lazar 90+2min.

Nov 15 - Reykjavik
Iceland 0
Croatia 0
Att: 9,767. **Ref:** Undiano Mallenco (Spa)
Iceland: Halldorsson - O Skulason, Arnason, R Sigurdsson, A Skulason, J Gudmundsson, A Gunnarsson, G Sigurdsson, B Bjarnason, Finnbogason (R Gislason 63), Sigthorsson (Gudjohnsen 46). *Sent off: O Skulason 50min.*
Croatia: Pletikosa - Srna, Simunic, Corluka, Pranjic, Perisic, Rakitic, Modric, Ilicevic (Olic 46), Mandzukic (Benko 87), Eduardo (Rebic 72).

Nov 15 - Lisbon
Portugal 1 (Cristiano Ronaldo 82)
Sweden 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 61,467. **Ref:** Rizzoli (Ita)
Portugal: Rui Patricio - Joao Pereira, Pepe, Bruno Alves, Fabio Coentrao, Joao Moutinho, Miguel Veloso, Raul Meireles (Josue 78), Nani, Helder Postiga (Hugo Almeida 66), Cristiano Ronaldo.
Sweden: Isaksson - Lustig, P Nilsson, Antonsson, M Olsson, S Larsson, R Elm (Wernbloom 72), Kallstrom (A Svensson 78), Kacaniklic, Elmander (Gerndt 88), Ibrahimovic.

Nov 15 - Kiev
Ukraine 2 (Zozulya 62, Yarmolenko pen 83)
France 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 67,732. **Ref:** Cakir (Tur)
Ukraine: Pyatov - Fedetskyi, Khacheridi, Kucher, Shevchuk, Stepanenko, Rotan, Yarmolenko, Edmar (Bezus 76), Konoplyanka (Husiev 90+2), Zozulya (Seleznyov 86). *Sent off: Kucher 90+4min.*
France: Lloris - Debuchy, Koscielny, Abidal, Evra, Pogba, Nasri (Valbuena 80), Matuidi, Remy (Sissoko 65), Giroud (Benzema 70), Ribery.
Sent off: Koscielny 90+1min.

2nd legs

Nov 19 - Zagreb
Croatia 2 (Mandzukic 27, Srna 47)
Iceland 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 22,612. **Ref:** Kuipers (Hol)
Croatia 2-0 on agg
Croatia: Pletikosa - Srna, Corluka, Simunic, Pranjic, Perisic, Modric (Lovren 90), Rakitic, Olic (Jelavic 81), Kovacic (Rebic 75), Mandzukic.
Sent off: Mandzukic 38min.
Iceland: Halldorsson - B Saevarsson, Arnason, R Sigurdsson, A Skulason, B Bjarnason, A Gunnarsson (Hallfredsson 73), G Sigurdsson, J Gudmundsson, Finnbogason, Gudjohnsen (R Gislason 65).

Nov 19 - Paris
France 3 (Sakho 22, 72, Benzema 34)
Ukraine 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 77,098. **Ref:** Skomina (Sln)
France 3-2 on agg
France: Lloris - Debuchy (Sagna 78), Varane, Sakho, Evra, Pogba, Cabaye, Matuidi, Valbuena, Benzema (Giroud 82), Ribery.
Ukraine: Pyatov - Mandzyuk, Khacheridi, Rakitskyi, Shevchuk, Yarmolenko, Rotan, Bezus (Husiev 64), Edmar, Konoplyanka, Zozulya (Seleznyov 76). *Sent off: Khacheridi 47min.*

Nov 19 - Bucharest
Romania 1 (Torosidis og 55)
Greece 1 (Mitroglou 23)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 49,793. **Ref:** Mazic (Ser)
Greece 4-2 on agg
Romania: Tatarusanu - Matel, Goian, Chiriches, Rat (Latovlevici 26), Hoban, Torje (M Niculae 56), Stancu (Grozav 87), Tanase, Maxim, Marica.
Greece: Karnezis - Torosidis (Vyntra 72), Papastathopoulos, Siovas (Manolas 80), Holebas, Maniatis, Karagounis (Samaris 73), Tziolis, Salpigidis, Mitroglou, Samaras.

Nov 19 - Stockholm
Sweden 2 (Ibrahimovic 68, 72)
Portugal 3 (Cristiano Ronaldo 50, 77, 79)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 49,766. **Ref:** Webb (Eng)
Portugal 4-2 on agg
Sweden: Isaksson - Lustig, P Nilsson, Antonsson, M Olsson, S Larsson (Gerndt 90), R Elm (A Svensson 46), Kallstrom, Kacaniklic (Durmaz 82), Elmander, Ibrahimovic.

12 people reported to have died while celebrating Algeria's qualification for the World Cup finals

ENGLAND

Wembley landmarks

Goalkeeper Fraser Forster became only the second Celtic player, after Alan Thompson, to represent the senior England side when he made his international debut in the 2-0 defeat by Chile at Wembley. Southampton team-mates Jay Rodriguez and Adam Lallana were also awarded their first caps in the game, with both starting.

Rodriguez was officially credited as being the 1,200th player to be capped by England.

ESTONIA

Nation's finest

Konstantin Vassiljev of Russian club Amkar Perm was voted Estonia's player of the year for a third time. The 29-year-old midfielder also won the award in 2010 and 2011.

Thirdtime a winner...Vassiljev

FRANCE

Deschamps rewarded

National coach Didier Deschamps had his contract extended just hours after "*Les Bleus*" beat Ukraine to qualify for the World Cup finals in Brazil.

The 45-year-old has signed on for an extra two years and will now lead the team at Euro 2016, which France will host.

Portugal: Rui Patricio - Joao Pereira, Pepe, Bruno Alves, Fabio Coentrao (Antunes 52), Joao Moutinho, Miguel Veloso, Raul Meireles (William 73), Nani, Hugo Almeida (Ricardo Costa 82), Cristiano Ronaldo.

● CROATIA, FRANCE, GREECE and PORTUGAL have qualified for the finals

AFRICA SECTION

● 5 finals places available

1st round

Chad v Tanzania 1-2, 1-0
(agg 2-2, Tanzania on away goals)
Comoros v Mozambique 0-1, 1-4 (agg 1-5)
Djibouti v Namibia 0-4, 0-4 (agg 0-8)
Equatorial Guinea v Madagascar 2-0, 1-2 (agg 3-2)
Eritrea v Rwanda 1-1, 1-3 (agg 2-4)
Guinea-Bissau v Togo 1-1, 0-1 (agg 1-2)
Lesotho v Burundi 1-0, 2-2 (agg 3-2)
Mauritius v Liberia
Mauritius withdrew; Liberia given bye to 2nd rnd
Sao Tome e Principe v Congo 0-5, 1-1 (agg 1-6)
Seychelles v Kenya 0-3, 0-4 (agg 0-7)
Somalia v Ethiopia 0-0, 0-5 (agg 0-5)
Swaziland v DR Congo 1-3, 1-5 (agg 2-8)

2nd round

Group A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ethiopia (Q)	6	4	1	1	8	6	13
South Africa	6	3	2	1	12	5	11
Botswana	6	2	1	3	8	10	7
Cent Af Rep	6	1	0	5	5	12	3

Group B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tunisia (Q)	6	4	2	0	13	6	14
Cape Verde	6	3	0	3	9	7	9
Sierra Leone	6	2	2	2	10	10	8
Eq Guinea	6	0	2	4	6	15	2

Group C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ivory Coast (Q)	6	4	2	0	15	5	14
Morocco	6	2	3	1	9	8	9
Tanzania	6	2	0	4	8	12	6
Gambia	6	1	1	4	4	11	4

Group D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ghana (Q)	6	5	0	1	18	3	15
Zambia	6	3	2	1	11	4	11
Lesotho	6	1	2	3	4	15	5
Sudan	6	0	2	4	3	14	2

Group E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Burkina F (Q)	6	4	0	2	7	4	12
Congo	6	3	2	1	7	3	11
Gabon	6	2	1	3	5	6	7
Niger	6	1	1	4	6	12	4

Group F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nigeria (Q)	6	3	3	0	7	3	12
Malawi	6	1	4	1	4	5	7
Kenya	6	1	3	2	4	5	6
Namibia	6	1	2	3	2	4	5

Group G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Egypt (Q)	6	6	0	0	16	7	18
Guinea	6	3	1	2	12	8	10
Mozambique	6	0	3	3	2	10	3
Zimbabwe	6	0	2	4	4	9	2

Group H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Algeria (Q)	6	5	0	1	13	4	15
Mali	6	2	2	2	7	7	8
Benin	6	2	2	2	8	9	8
Rwanda	6	0	2	4	3	11	2

Group I

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cameroon (Q)	6	4	1	1	8	3	13
Libya	6	2	3	1	5	3	9
DR Congo	6	1	3	2	3	3	6
Togo	6	1	1	4	4	11	4

Group J

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Senegal (Q)	6	3	3	0	9	4	12
Uganda	6	2	2	2	5	6	8
Angola	6	1	4	1	7	5	7
Liberia	6	1	1	4	3	9	4

3rd round

2nd legs

Nov 16 - Calabar
Nigeria 2 (Moses pen 20, Obinna 82)
Ethiopia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Gassama (Gam)
Nigeria 4-1 on agg
Nigeria: Enyeama - Ambrose, Oboabona, Echiejile, Omeruo (Egwuekwe 68), Onazi, Mikel, Moses (Obinna 79), Musa, Ideye (Mba 59), Emenike.
Ethiopia: Sisay - Alula, Abebaw, Saladin Bargecho, Aynalem, Minyahile (Dawit Fekadu 81), Shemeles (Addis 75), Getaneh (Behailu 60), Adane, Asrat, Saladin Said.

Nov 16 - Casablanca, Morocco
Senegal 1 (Sow pen 77)
Ivory Coast 1 (Kalou 90+4)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Haimoudi (Alg)
Ivory Coast 4-2 on agg
Senegal: Coundoul - L Sane, Mbodji, Djilobodji, S Sane, Gueye, Badji (Saivet 82), Souare (M Diouf 90+2), S Mane, D Ndoye (Sow 65), P D Cisse.
Ivory Coast: Barry - K Toure, Zokora, Bamba, Aurier, Y Toure, Gosso, Romaric, Kalou, Drogba, Gervinho (Sio 80).

Nov 17 - Yaounde
Cameroon 4 (Webo 3, Moukandjo 30, Makoun 65, 86)
Tunisia 1 (Akaichi 49)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 35,570. **Ref:** Seechurn (Mrs)
Cameroon 4-1 on agg
Cameroon: Itandje - Mbia (Nounkeu 69), N'Koulou, Chedjou, Assou-Ekotto, Moukandjo (Nguemo 83), Enoh, Makoun, Song, Eto'o, Webo (Choupo-Moting 60).
Tunisia: Ben Cherifia - Haggui, Mikari, Derbali, S Ben Youssef, Chikhaoui (Camus 46), Ragued, Ben Yahia (Allagui 73), Chermiti (Akaichi 46), Khelifa, F Ben Youssef.

Nov 19 - Blida
Algeria 1 (Bougherra 49)
Burkina Faso 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Diatta (Sen)
Agg 3-3; Algeria on away goals
Algeria: Zemmamouche - Khoualed, Bougherra, Medjani, Ghoulam, Lacen, Mostefa (Taider 86), Feghouli (Kadir 90), Brahimi (Yebda 66), Soudani, Slimani.
Burkina Faso: Diakite - Balima, B Kone, Yago (Alain Traore 78), Panandetiguiri, D Kone, Rouamba (Bance 64), C Kabore, Zongo (B Traore 64), Pitroipa, Nakoulma.

Nov 19 - Cairo
Egypt 2 (Zaki 25, Gedo 84)
Ghana 1 (K-P Boateng 89)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Doue (IvC)
Ghana 7-3 on agg
Egypt: Ekramy - Emam, Rabia, Naguib, Abdel Shafy, Fathy (Abd Rabo 56), Ghaly, Aboutraika, Kahraba (Gedo 40), M Salah, Zaki (Shikabala 62).
Ghana: Dauda - Afful, Akaminko, Opare, Sumaila, Essien, Muntari (Agyemang-Badu 73), K Asamoah, Gyan, A Ayew (Wakaso 58), Waris (K-P Boateng 79).

● ALGERIA, CAMEROON, GHANA, IVORY COAST and NIGERIA have qualified for the finals

SOUTH AMERICA SECTION

● 5.5 finals places available, one of which goes automatically to hosts BRAZIL

(single, round-robin group)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ARGENTINA (F)	16	9	5	2	35	15	32
COLOMBIA (F)	16	9	3	4	27	13	30
CHILE (F)	16	9	1	6	29	25	28
ECUADOR (F)	16	7	4	5	20	16	25
Uruguay (QP)	16	7	4	5	25	25	25
Venezuela	16	5	5	6	14	20	20
Peru	16	4	3	9	17	26	15
Bolivia	16	2	6	8	17	30	12
Paraguay	16	3	3	10	17	31	12

● The top 4 qualified for the finals
● As the 5th-placed team, Uruguay met Asia section play-off winners Jordan in the intercontinental play-offs (see start of World Cup qualifiers section) for a place in the finals

ASIA SECTION

● 4.5 finals places available

1st round

Afghanistan v Palestine 0-2, 1-1 (agg 1-3)
Bangladesh v Pakistan 3-0, 0-0 (agg 3-0)
Cambodia v Laos 4-2, 2-6 (agg 6-8)
Malaysia v Taiwan 2-1, 2-3
(agg 4-4, Malaysia on away goals)
Mongolia v Myanmar 1-0, 0-2 (agg 1-2)
Nepal v East Timor 2-1, 5-0 (agg 7-1)
Sri Lanka v Philippines 1-1, 0-4 (agg 1-5)
Vietnam v Macau 6-0, 7-1 (agg 13-1)

2nd round

China v Laos 7-2, 6-1 (agg 13-3)
Iran v Maldives 4-0, 1-0 (agg 5-0)
Iraq v Yemen 2-0, 0-0 (agg 2-0)
Jordan v Nepal 9-0, 1-1 (agg 10-1)
Kuwait v Philippines 3-0, 2-1 (agg 5-1)
Lebanon v Bangladesh 4-0, 0-2 (agg 4-2)
Oman v Myanmar 2-0, 2-0 (agg 4-0)
Qatar v Vietnam 3-0, 1-2 (agg 4-2)
Saudi Arabia v Hong Kong 3-0, 5-0 (agg 8-0)
Singapore v Malaysia 5-3, 1-1 (agg 6-4)
Syria v Tajikistan 0-3 (awd), 0-3 (awd) (agg 0-6)
Thailand v Palestine 1-0, 2-2 (agg 3-2)
Turkmenistan v Indonesia 1-1, 3-4 (agg 4-5)
United Arab Emirates v India 3-0, 2-2 (agg 5-2)
Uzbekistan v Kyrgyzstan 4-0, 3-0 (agg 7-0)

3rd round

Group A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iraq (Q)	6	5	0	1	14	4	15
Jordan (Q)	6	4	0	2	11	7	12
China	6	3	0	3	10	6	9
Singapore	6	0	0	6	2	20	0

Group B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sth Korea (Q)	6	4	1	1	14	4	13
Lebanon (Q)	6	3	1	2	10	14	10
Kuwait	6	2	2	2	8	9	8
UAE	6	1	0	5	9	14	3

Group C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Uzbekistan (Q)	6	5	1	0	8	1	16
Japan (Q)	6	3	1	2	14	3	10
North Korea	6	2	1	3	3	4	7
Tajikistan	6	0	1	5	1	18	1

Group D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Australia (Q)	6	5	0	1	13	5	15
Oman (Q)	6	2	2	2	3	6	8
Saudi Arabia	6	1	3	2	6	7	6
Thailand	6	1	1	4	4	8	4

Group E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iran (Q)	6	3	3	0	17	5	12
Qatar (Q)	6	2	4	0	10	5	10
Bahrain	6	2	3	1	13	7	9
Indonesia	6	0	0	6	3	26	0

4th round

Group A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
IRAN (F)	8	5	1	2	8	2	16
STH KOREA (F)	8	4	2	2	13	7	14
Uzbekistan (QP)	8	4	2	2	11	6	14
Qatar	8	2	1	5	5	13	7
Lebanon	8	1	2	5	3	12	5

Group B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
JAPAN (F)	8	5	2	1	16	5	17
AUSTRALIA (F)	8	3	4	1	12	7	13
Jordan (QP)	8	3	1	4	7	16	10
Oman	8	2	3	3	7	10	9
Iraq	8	1	2	5	4	8	5

● The top 2 in both groups qualified for the finals
● The 2 3rd-placed teams went forward to the Asia section play-off

Asia section play-off

Jordan v Uzbekistan 1-1, 1-1 (aet)
(agg 2-2, Jordan 9-8 on pens)

● As Asia section play-off winners, Jordan met 5th-placed South American team Uruguay in the intercontinental play-offs (see start of World Cup qualifiers section) for a place in the finals

World Service

No danger...Weidenfeller (in red)

GERMANY

Keeper's quiet debut

At 33 years and 105 days, Borussia Dortmund's Roman Weidenfeller became the oldest goalkeeper to make his debut for Germany with his first cap in the 1-0 victory against England.

However, he did not have a save to make as England failed to register a single effort on target for the first time in a home game since 1999, when they lost 1-0 to Scotland.

GIBRALTAR

Historic draw

UEFA's newest member drew 0-0 with Slovakia in its first-ever game at senior international level.

The game was played at the Estadio do Algarve in Portugal and attracted just a few hundred fans to the 30,000-capacity stadium – which could have housed the entire population of Gibraltar.

With their own Victoria Stadium not meeting the necessary requirements to play competitive matches, Gibraltar will play their "home" games in the Euro 2016 qualifying campaign in the Algarve region.

Senior bow...Gibraltar (in red)

CONCACAF SECTION

● 3.5 finals places available

1st round

Anguilla v Dominican Republic
0-2, 0-4 (agg 0-6)
Aruba v St Lucia 4-2, 2-4
(agg 6-6, St Lucia 5-4 on pens)
Montserrat v Belize 2-5, 1-3 (agg 3-8)
Turks & Caicos Is v Bahamas
0-4, 0-6 (agg 0-10)
US Virgin Is v British Virgin Is 2-0, 2-1 (agg 4-1)

2nd round

Group A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
El Salvador (Q)	6	6	0	0	20	5	18
Dominican Rep	6	2	2	2	12	8	8
Surinam	6	2	1	3	5	11	7
Cayman Is	6	0	1	5	2	15	1

Group B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guyana (Q)	6	4	1	1	9	6	13
Trinidad & Tob	6	4	0	2	12	4	12
Bermuda	6	3	1	2	8	7	10
Barbados	6	0	0	6	2	14	0

Group C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Panama (Q)	4	4	0	0	15	2	12
Nicaragua	4	2	0	2	5	7	6
Dominica	4	0	0	4	0	11	0

Bahamas withdrew before start of 2nd round

Group D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Canada (Q)	6	4	2	0	18	1	14
Puerto Rico	6	2	3	1	8	4	9
St Kitts & N'vis	6	1	4	1	6	8	7
St Lucia	6	0	1	5	4	23	1

Group E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guatemala (Q)	6	6	0	0	19	3	18
Belize	6	2	1	3	9	10	7
St Vincent & G	6	1	2	3	4	12	5
Grenada	6	1	1	4	7	14	4

Group F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Antigua & B (Q)	6	5	0	1	28	5	15
Haiti	6	4	1	1	21	6	13
Curacao	6	2	1	3	15	15	7
US Virgin Is	6	0	0	6	2	40	0

3rd round

Group A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
USA (Q)	6	4	1	1	11	6	13
Jamaica (Q)	6	3	1	2	9	6	10
Guatemala	6	3	1	2	9	8	10
Antigua & B'da	6	0	1	5	4	13	1

Group B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mexico (Q)	6	6	0	0	15	2	18
Costa Rica (Q)	6	3	1	2	14	5	10
El Salvador	6	1	2	3	8	11	5
Guyana	6	0	1	5	5	24	1

Group C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Honduras (Q)	6	3	2	1	12	3	11
Panama (Q)	6	3	2	1	6	2	11
Canada	6	3	1	2	6	10	10
Cuba	6	0	1	5	1	10	1

4th round

(single, round-robin group)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
USA (F)	10	7	1	2	15	8	22
COSTA RICA (F)	10	5	3	2	13	7	18
HONDURAS (F)	10	4	3	3	13	12	15
Mexico (QP)	10	2	5	3	7	9	11
Panama	10	1	5	4	10	14	8
Jamaica	10	0	5	5	5	13	5

● The top 3 qualified for the finals
● As the 4th-placed team, Mexico met Oceania section winners New Zealand in the intercontinental play-offs (see start of World Cup qualifiers section) for a place in the finals

OCEANIA SECTION

● 0.5 finals places available

1st round

(single, round-robin group)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Samoa (Q)	3	2	1	0	5	3	7
Tonga	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Am'can Samoa	3	1	1	1	3	3	4
Cook Islands	3	0	1	2	4	6	1

2nd round

Group A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tahiti (Q)	3	3	0	0	18	5	9
N Caledonia (Q)	3	2	0	1	17	6	6
Vanuatu	3	1	0	2	8	9	3
Samoa	3	0	0	3	1	24	0

Group B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
N Zealand (Q)	3	2	1	0	4	2	7
Solomon Is (Q)	3	1	2	0	2	1	5
Fiji	3	0	2	1	1	2	2
Papua NG	3	0	1	2	2	4	1

3rd round

(single, round-robin group)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
N Zealand (QP)	6	6	0	0	17	2	18
New Caledonia	6	4	0	2	17	6	12
Tahiti	6	1	0	5	2	12	3
Solomon Is	6	1	0	5	5	21	3

● As Oceania section winners, New Zealand met the 4th-placed CONCACAF team Mexico in the intercontinental play-offs (see start of World Cup qualifiers section) for a place in the finals

TOP GOALSCORERS

Europe
11 Robin Van Persie (Holland)
10 Edin Dzeko (Bosnia-Herzegovina)
South America
11 Luis Suarez (Uruguay)
10 Lionel Messi (Argentina)
CONCACAF
11 Deon McCaulay (Belize)
Africa
6 Mohamed Aboutraika (Egypt)
6 Asamoah Gyan (Ghana)
6 Mohamed Salah (Egypt)
Asia
8 Shinji Okazaki (Japan)
Oceania
8 Georges Gope-Fenepej (New Caledonia)

KEY TO WORLD CUP QUALIFYING TABLES
(F) = qualified for World Cup finals
(QP) = qualified for a play-off
(Q) = qualified for next qualifying round

2015 ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS

Group A

Nov 15 - Tehran, Iran
Syria 4 (Malki 10, Al Douni 83, Al Jaffal 87, Al Agha 90+1)
Singapore 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 50. **Ref:** Tojo (Jap)

Nov 19 - Tehran, Iran
Syria 0
Oman 1 (Al Farsi 90+1)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 200. **Ref:** Hussain (Qat)

ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Oman (Q)	4	3	1	0	4	0	10
Jordan	3	1	2	0	5	1	5
Syria	5	1	1	3	6	5	4
Singapore	4	1	0	3	2	11	3

Remaining fixtures
Jan 31, 2014: Oman v Jordan.
Feb 4, 2014: Singapore v Jordan.
Mar 5, 2014: Jordan v Syria; Oman v Singapore.

Group B

Nov 15 - Kuwait City
Kuwait 0
Lebanon 0
Att: 11,500. **Ref:** Al Ghamdi (Sau)

Nov 15 - Bangkok
Thailand 0
Iran 3 (Dejagah 28, Ghoochannejhad 43, Jahanbakhsh 90+3)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 7,000. **Ref:** Williams (Aus)
Sent off: Phuwadol (Thailand) 90+2min

Nov 19 - Kuwait City
Kuwait 3 (Nasser 19, 71, Awadh pen 56)
Thailand 1 (Mongkol 68)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Kovalenko (Uzb)
Sent off: Wasan (Thailand) 90min

Nov 19 - Beirut
Lebanon 1 (M Haidar 79)
Iran 4 (Sadeghi 39, Dejagah 50, Nekounam pen 54, Ghoochannejhad 64)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 100. **Ref:** Tan (Chn)

ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iran (Q)	5	4	1	0	15	3	13
Kuwait (Q)	5	2	3	0	8	4	9
Lebanon	5	1	2	2	7	12	5
Thailand	5	0	0	5	5	16	0

Remaining fixtures
Mar 5, 2014: Iran v Kuwait; Thailand v Lebanon.

Group C

Nov 15 - Xian
China 1 (Wu Lei 45+1)
Indonesia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 33,217. **Ref:** Green (Aus)

Nov 15 - Dammam
Saudi Arabia 2 (Al Jassim 17, Al Shamrani 60)
Iraq 1 (Mahmoud 45+1)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 21,600. **Ref:** Toma (Jap)

Nov 19 - Xian
China 0
Saudi Arabia 0
Att: 36,016. **Ref:** Kim Dong-jin (SKo)

Nov 19 - Jakarta
Indonesia 0
Iraq 2 (Ahmad 27, Jassim pen 33)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 300. **Ref:** Irmatov (Uzb)

ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS – GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Saudi A'bia (Q)	5	4	1	0	8	3	13
China	5	2	2	1	4	3	8
Iraq	5	2	0	3	4	5	6
Indonesia	5	0	1	4	2	7	1

Remaining fixtures
Mar 5, 2014: Iraq v China; Saudi Arabia v Indonesia.

Group D

Nov 15 - Manama
Bahrain 1 (Abdullatif 72)
Malaysia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 2,000. **Ref:** Mohsen (Irn)

Nov 15 - Al Ain, UAE
Yemen 1 (Al Sasi 26)
Qatar 4 (Soria 3, Hassan 32, Abdurabu og 54, El Sayed 68)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 350. **Ref:** Al Awaji (Sau)
Sent off: Al Khamri (Yemen) 86min

Nov 19 - Manama
Bahrain 2 (Salmeen 1, Aaish 88)
Yemen 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 600. **Ref:** Nishimura (Jap)

Nov 19 - Shah Alam
Malaysia 0
Qatar 1 (Al Ali 65)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 4,079. **Ref:** Kim Sang-woo (SKo)

ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS – GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bahrain (Q)	5	4	1	0	7	1	13
Qatar (Q)	5	4	0	1	13	2	12
Malaysia	5	1	1	3	3	6	4
Yemen	5	0	0	5	2	16	0

Remaining fixtures
Mar 5, 2014: Qatar v Bahrain; Yemen v Malaysia.

GREECE

Honesty pays off

Greece team director Takis Fyssas saved Romania from the possibility of forfeiting the first leg of their World Cup play-off after pointing out the visitors had only two goalkeepers in their squad, rather than the three that FIFA rules stipulate.

It was important to do the right thing," said Fysass after Greece won 3-1 and then clinched their place in the finals with a 1-1 draw in the return. "I preferred to qualify on the pitch rather than on paper," he added.

HOLLAND

Forgettable first time

Chelsea left-back Patrick Van Aanholt, who is on a season-long loan at Vitesse, made his international debut against Colombia but did not touch the ball once.

The 23-year-old came on as a sub in the second minute of injury time.

INDIA

New national record

Sunil Chhetri became India's all-time record international scorer when his first-half goal in a 2-0 friendly win over Nepal took him to 43.

Record breaker...Chhetri

LITHUANIA

Kalonas is number one

Mindaugas Kalonas of Azerbaijani side Baku was named Lithuanian player of the year. The 29-year-old midfielder finished ahead of Leeds United defender Marius Zaliukas and Gaziantepspor goalkeeper Zydrunas Karcemarskas, who was last year's winner.

Group E

Nov 15 - Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates 4 (Saleh 32, Abbas 40, Abdulrahman 80, Al Hammadi 87)
Hong Kong 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 10,871. **Ref:** Faghani (Irn)

Nov 15 - Hanoi
Vietnam 0
Uzbekistan 3 (Shodiev 40, Sergeev 46, Rashidov 89)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 9,000. **Ref:** Kim Jong-hyeok (SKo)
Sent off: Le Tan Tai (Vietnam) 90+3min

Nov 19 - Hong Kong
Hong Kong 0
Uzbekistan 2 (Shodiev 84, Ahmedov 89)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 5,679. **Ref:** Shukralla (Bhn)
Sent off: Cheung Kin-fung (Hong Kong) 45min

Nov 19 - Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates 5 (Abbas 19, Matar 25, Mabkhout 31, Al Fardan 37, Khalil 90+2)
Vietnam 0
HT: 4-0. **Att:** 9,674. **Ref:** Sato (Jap)
Sent off: Chau Le Phuoc Vinh (Vietnam) 7min

ASIAN CUP QUALIFIERS – GROUP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
UAE (Q)	5	5	0	0	17	2	15
Uzbekistan (Q)	5	3	1	1	9	3	10
Hong Kong	5	1	1	3	1	10	4
Vietnam	5	0	0	5	2	14	0

Remaining fixtures
Mar 5, 2014: Uzbekistan v UAE; Vietnam v Hong Kong.

Top 2 in each group and the 3rd-placed team with the best record qualify for finals, to which hosts Australia, Japan, North Korea, South Korea and the 2014 AFC Challenge Cup winner qualify automatically

ABCS TOURNAMENT

(ABCS = initials of competing teams)

In Willemstad, Curacao

Semi-finals

Nov 14
Surinam 2 (Talea 21, Apai 61)
Bonaire 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Jauregui (Cur)

Nov 14
Curacao 2 (Isenia 14, 31)
Aruba 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Dolaini (Sur)

3rd-place match

Nov 16
Bonaire 2 (I Piar 74, Barzey 77)
Aruba 1 (Escalona 43)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Dimie (Cur)
Sent off: Baten (Aruba) 47min; Gijsbertha (Bonaire) 83min

Final

Nov 16
Surinam 3 (Pinas 4, Najoe 67, 88)
Curacao 1 (Leuteria 43)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Jauregui (Cur)

FRIENDLIES

Friday, November 1

Nov 1 - Jakarta
Indonesia 4 (Zulham 26, 41, Bonai 66, Jufriyanto 70)
Kyrgyzstan 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 1,527. **Ref:** Abdul Wahab (Mly)

Wednesday, November 6

Nov 6 - Doha, Qatar
Jordan 1 (Chama og 77)
Zambia 0
HT: 0-0

Friday, November 8

Nov 8 - Kuwait City
Kuwait 3 (F Al Rashidi 7, Al Hashan 35, Ajab 54)
Malaysia 0
HT: 2-0

Saturday, November 9

Nov 9 - Riffa
Bahrain 1 (Abdullatif 50)
Lebanon 0
HT: 0-0

Nov 9 - Abu Dhabi
United Arab Emirates 4 (Saleh 19, Abbas 43, Matar 60, Mabkhout 78)
Philippines 0
HT: 2-0

Sunday, November 10

Nov 10 - Zarqa, Jordan
Iraq 2 (Ahmad 26, Abdul Zahra 81)
Syria 1 (Kharben 17)
HT: 1-1

Thursday, November 14

Nov 14 - Brussels
Belgium 0
Colombia 2 (Falcao 51, Ibarbo 67)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 50,000. **Ref:** Clattenburg (Eng)
Belgium: Mignolet - Meunier, Alderweireld, Vermaelen, Vertonghen, Witsel, Defour (Mirallas 58), Fellaini, De Bruyne (Lukaku 58), E Hazard (Mertens 65), Benteke (Dembele 74).
Colombia: Mondragon - S Arias, Perea, Zapata, Armero, Sanchez (Mejia 84), A Ramirez (Aguilar 63), Rodriguez (Torres 79), Cuadrado (Guarin 69), Muriel (Ibarbo 60), Falcao (Martinez 71).

Nov 14 - Cairo
Egypt 2 (Zaki 8, Rabia 22)
Zambia 0
HT: 2-0
Egypt: El Shenawy - Emam, Rabia (Kahraba), Naguib (Fadhil), Abdel Shafy (Moawad), M Salah (Shikabala), Ghaly, Aboutraika (Eid), Abd Rabo, Zaki (El Nenny), Gedo.
Zambia: Mweene - Chisenga (Chongo), Mbola (Kabwe), Chama, Sunzu, Sinkala, Lungu, F Katongo (Kampamba), Tembo (Mayuka), Musakanya (Chivuta), Kola (Mbesuma).

Friday, November 15

Nov 15 - Antalya, Turkey
Belarus 0
Albania 0
Belarus: Chernik - Polyakov, Radkov, Bordachev (Chukhlei 46), Verkhovtsov, Tigorev, Dragun (Olekhnovich 46), Kalachev (Aleksiyevich 46), Krivets (Veretsilo 78), Balanovich (Putsilo 66), Rodionov (Gordeychuk 46).
Albania: Berisha (Shehi 60) - Lila, Cana, Lenjani (Hysaj 81), Arapi, Gashi (Cani 53), Basha, Lilaj, Rama (Balaj 71), Meha (Roshi 65), Sadiku (Memushaj 71).

Nov 15 - Olomouc
Czech Republic 2 (Celustka 3, Horava 81)
Canada 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 9,749. **Ref:** Markham-Jones (Wal)
Czech Republic: Cech - Gebre Selassie, Sivok (Mazuch 46), Suchy, Celustka, Hubschman, Dockal (Rajtoral 86), Vanek (Jiracek 46), Krejci (Horava 57), V Kadlec (Sural 75), Kozak (Vydra 46).
Canada: Hirschfeld - Ledgerwood, Henry, Hainault, De Jong (Morgan 62), Straith, Ricketts (Attakora 73), Pacheco (Bekker 73), Osorio (Teibert 62), Jackson (Porter 24), De Rosario (Clarke 82)

Nov 15 - Herning
Denmark 2 (Kvist 14, Boilesen 90)
Norway 1 (Pedersen 78)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 6,084. **Ref:** Schorgenhofer (Aut)
Denmark: Andersen - Jacobsen (P Ankersen 46), Kjaer, Agger, Boilesen, Zimling (Sloth 46), Kvist, Larsen (Kusk 75), Eriksen (N Jorgensen 41), Krohn-Dehli, Bendtner (Fischer 60).
Norway: Jarstein - Elabdellaoui (Linnes 86), Reginiussen, Forren, Hogli (Skjelvik 64), Skjelbred (Daehli 60), Johansen (Eikrem 74), Jenssen, Elyounoussi (Gamst Pedersen 60), Kamara (Abdellaoue 74), Pedersen.

Nov 15 - East Rutherford, USA
Ecuador 0
Argentina 0
Ref: Petrescu (Can)
Ecuador: Dominguez - Paredes, Guagua, Erazo, W Ayovi, A Valencia (Rojas 89), Castillo, Noboa (Gaibor 84), Montero (Martinez 73), F Caicedo (J Ayovi 73), E Valencia (Ibarra 60).
Argentina: Romero - Roncaglia (Zabaleta 63), F Fernandez, Garay, Orban, Banega (Biglia 69), Mascherano, Alvarez (Maxi Rodriguez 79), Di Maria, Lavezzi (Aguero 63), Higuain (Palacio 71).

Nov 15 - London
England 0
Chile 2 (Sanchez 7, 90)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 62,953. **Ref:** Meyer (Ger)
England: Forster - Johnson, Cahill, Jones (Smalling 57), Baines, Lampard (Henderson 71), Milner (Defoe 66), Lallana (Barkley 77), Wilshere (Cleverley 71), Rodriguez (Townsend 57), Rooney.
Chile: Bravo - Isla (Jara 60), Medel, M Gonzalez, Mena, Vargas (Munoz 71), Diaz, Aranguiz (Carmona 46), M Fernandez (Gutierrez 46), Beausejour (Fuenzalida 82), Sanchez.

Nov 15 - Tallinn
Estonia 2 (Zenjov 54, Lindpere 66)
Azerbaijan 1 (Aliyev 44)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 2,413. **Ref:** Nikolaev (Rus)
Estonia: Pareiko - Kams (Teniste 61), Reintam, Artjunin, Kallaste, Ojamaa (Mosnikov 55), Dmitrijev (Lindpere 55), Vassiljev, Kruglov (Luts 78), Anier (Hunt 78), Zenjov (Kink 65).
Azerbaijan: Nazirov - B Huseynov (Budak 46), Ramaldanov, Shukurov, Allahverdiyev, Javadov (Ozkara 77), Dadashov (Fardzhad-Azad 59), Aliyev, Abishov, Medvedev (Gokdemir 76), Amirguliyev.

Nov 15 - Siliguri
India 1 (Chhetri 43)
Philippines 1 (P Younghusband 44)
HT: 1-1

Nov 15 - Milan
Italy 1 (Abate 28)
Germany 1 (Hummels 8)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 49,000. **Ref:** Benquerenca (Por)
Italy: Buffon - Abate, Barzagli (Ogbonna 71), Bonucci, Criscito, Pirlo (Cerci 82), Marchisio, Thiago Motta, Montolivo, Osvaldo (Candreva 53), Balotelli.
Germany: Neuer - Howedes, Boateng, Hummels, Jansen, Lahm, Khedira (S Bender 67), Kroos, T Muller (L Bender 87), Schurrle (Reus 59), Gotze (Ozil 59).

Nov 15 - Montego Bay
Jamaica 0
Trinidad & Tobago 1 (Guerra 5)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Pitti (Pan)
Jamaica: McCallum - Powell, Dicoy Williams (Edwards 72), Lawrence, Phinn, O Daley (Jason Johnson 72), Vanzie (Woozencraft 46), Watson, Mattocks (Hall 85), D Brown (B Brown 72), Anderson (Seaton 46).
Trinidad & Tobago: J-M Williams - Hoyte (Gonzales 59), Bateau, Cyrus, David, Peltier (Theobald 85), K George, Boucaud, Guerra (J Jones 66), Winchester (Abu Bakr 90), K Jones.

Nov 15 - Sousse, Tunisia
Libya 1
Niger 1
HT: 0-0

Nov 15 - Wroclaw
Poland 0
Slovakia 2 (Kucka 31, Mak 39)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 40,605. **Ref:** Borg (Mlt)
Poland: Boruc - Olkowski, Jedrzejczyk, Kaminski, Kosznik (Marciniak 87), Krychowiak (Pazdan 87), Jodlowiec (Maczynski 76), Blaszczykowski, Mierzejewski (Brzyski 67), Sobota (Robak 76), R Lewandowski.
Slovakia: Kozacik - Pekarik, Skrtel, Durica, Hubocan, Pecovsky (Sestak 90), Kucka (Salata 90+4), Mak (Duris 63), Hamsik (Cisovsky 85), Stoch (Svento 75), Nemec (Bakos 63).

Nov 15 - Dublin
Republic of Ireland 3 (Keane 22, McGeady 68, Long 80)
Latvia 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 37,100. **Ref:** Ekberg (Swe)
Rep Ireland: Westwood - Coleman, O'Shea, Wilson, Ward, McGeady (A Reid 73), Whelan (Stokes 80), McCarthy (Doyle 80), McClean (Green 80), Hoolahan (Long 73), Keane (Walters 73).
Latvia: Vanins - Gabovs, Bulvitis, Gorkss, Maksimenko, Rode, Rugins (Fertovs 27), Laizans (Sinelnikovs 73), Lazdins, Sabala (Turkovs 62), Verpakovskis (Visnakovs 46).

Nov 15 - Dubai, UAE
Russia 1 (Samedov 30)
Serbia 1 (Djordjevic 31)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Al Zarouni (UAE)
Russia: Akinfeev - Kozlov (Eshchenko 62), Ignashevich, Granat, Kombarov, Glushakov, Fayzulin (Tarasov 84), Shirokov (Ryazantsev 89), Samedov, Ionov (Smolov 64), Kokorin.
Serbia: Stojkovic - Rukavina, Ivanovic, Bisevac, Kolarov, Matic (Milivojevic 73), Radovanovic (Fejsa 47), Basta, Tadic (Djuricic 73), Z Tosic (Zivkovic 83), Djordjevic (Scepovic 63).

47 goals scored by Cristiano Ronaldo, equalling Portugal's all-time international record

POLAND

Milik hits six

Bayer Leverkusen striker Arkadiusz Milik followed up a hat-trick against Malta in the Euro Under-21 qualifiers with another treble, against Greece, four days later.

The 19-year-old is the tournament's top scorer, with nine goals in six games, and Poland are currently top of Group 7.

RUSSIA

Zenit pair capped

Goalkeeper Yuri Lodygin and defender Igor Smolnikov, both of Zenit, made their international debuts in the 2-1 friendly victory over South Korea.

SPAIN

Bartra breaks through

Spain coach Vicente Del Bosque, who has agreed a two-year contract extension, handed Barcelona defender Marc Bartra his first cap in the 2-1 win against Equatorial Guinea.

Seventh heaven...Ibrahimovic

SWEDEN

Ibra's seven in a row

Zlatan Ibrahimovic was named Sweden's player of the year for the eighth time. The Paris Saint-Germain striker has now

Nov 15 - Glasgow
Scotland 0
United States 0
Att: 21,079. **Ref:** Oliver (Eng)
Scotland: Marshall - Hutton, Whittaker (L Wallace 69), Hanley, Greer, Bannan (Naismith 81), Mulgrew, Brown, S Fletcher, Snodgrass (McCormack 69), Conway (Mackay-Steven 84).
United States: Howard - Evans (Lichaj 72), Gonzalez, Cameron, Beasley, Bradley, Jones (Diskerud 62), Bedoya (Wondolowski 81), Kljestan (Johannsson 62), E Johnson (Shea 62), Altidore (Boyd 90).

Nov 15 - Seoul
South Korea 2 (Hong Jeong-ho 58, Lee Chung-yong 86)
Switzerland 1 (Kasami 6)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 36,813. **Ref:** Abal (Arg)
South Korea: Kim Seung-gyu - Lee Yong, Hong Jeong-ho, Jang Hyun-soo, Kim Young-gwon, Kim Jin-soo, Son Heung-min (Nam Tae-hee 77), Lee Chung-yong, Ki Sung-yeung, Kim Shin-wook (Yun Il-lok 82), Kim Bo-kyung (Lee Keun-ho 46).
Switzerland: Benaglio - Ziegler, Von Bergen (Senderos 46), Lang (Fernandes 64), Schar (Lustenberger 46), Barnetta (Drmic 84), Inler, Xhaka, Dzemaili, Kasami (Mehmedi 71), Seferovic (Gavranovic 73).

Nov 15 - Lobamba
Swaziland 0
South Africa 3 (Letsholonyane 47, Zungu 48, Nthethe 63)
HT: 0-0
Swaziland: Gwebu - Tsabedze, Maseko, Mkhweli, Mabila, M Dlamini, B Dlamini, Christie (Nhleko 62), Ndzinisa (Steenkamp 76), Tsabedze, Badenhorst (Mthethwa 87).
South Africa: Meyiwa - Jele, Matlaba (Mashamaite 62), Mahamutsa, Nthethe, Letsholonyane (Kekana 78), Tshabalala (Vilakazi 61), Jali, Chabangu (Zungu 46), Parker (Mangele 69), Erasmus (Bacela 46).

Nov 15 - Adana
Turkey 1 (Erdinc 45+1)
Northern Ireland 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Nijhuis (Hol)
Turkey: Tolga - Semih, Gokhan Gonul (Camdal 71), Ersan, Bilal (Olcay 83), Ozyakup (Burak 46), Arda (Dogan 89), Mehmet Topal, Caner, Erdinc (Gokhan Tore 76), Adem (Salih 67).
Northern Ireland: Carroll (Mannus 46) - Hughes, Baird, D Lafferty (McGivern 75), J Evans, Hodson, Paterson, McGinn (Steele 67), Norwood, Clingan (McKay 75), Davis.

Saturday, November 16

Nov 16 - Malabo
Equatorial Guinea 1 (Bermudez 36)
Spain 2 (Cazorla 13, Juanfran 42)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 13,500. **Ref:** Esono Eyang (EqG)
Equatorial Guinea: Danilo - Akapo, Mbele, Bermudez, Sipo, Juvenal (Belima 88), Ellong (Eduardo Ferreira 81), Nsue, Balboa (Bodipo 85), Ivan Bolado (Dio 46), Fidjeu (Valeriano 60).
Spain: Reina - Juanfran, Bartra, Inigo Martinez (Sergio Ramos 79), Moreno, Koke (Iniesta 57), Xabi Alonso (Busquets 42), Cazorla (Villa 57), Jesus Navas (Pedro 65), Negredo (Llorente 46), Mata.

Nov 16 - Genk, Belgium
Holland 2 (Van der Vaart 13, Robben 39)
Japan 2 (Osako 44, Honda 60)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 13,616. **Ref:** Gumienny (Blg)
Holland: Cillessen - Janmaat, De Vrij, Vlaar, Blind, Strootman, N De Jong (Willems 46), Van der Vaart (De Guzman 79), Robben, S De Jong (Depay 69), Lens.
Japan: Nishikawa - Uchida (H Sakai 79), Yoshida, Konno, Nagatomo (G Sakai 73), Yamaguchi, Hasebe (Endo 46), Okazaki, Honda, Kiyotake (Kagawa 46), Osako (Kakitani 73).

Nov 16 - Miami, USA
Honduras 0
Brazil 5 (Bernard 21, Dante 54, Maicon 65, Willian 69, Hulk 75)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 71,124. **Ref:** Gantar (Can)
Honduras: Valladares - Izaguirre (J Garcia 73), Bernardez (Montes 64), Figueroa, A Peralta, Espinoza (M Chavez 64), W Palacios (Delgado 70), Claros, O Garcia (Najar 64), Bengtson (J Palacios 69), Costly.
Brazil: Victor - Maicon, David Luiz (Marquinhos 72), Dante, Maxwell (Lucas Leiva 70), Luiz Gustavo, Paulinho, Oscar (Ramires 63), Bernard (Willian 46), Neymar (Hulk 66), Jo (Robinho 46).

Nov 16 - Vientiane
Laos 1 (Vongchiengkham pen 60)
Guam 1 (Cunliffe pen 90)
HT: 0-0

Nov 16 - Kampala
Uganda 0
Rwanda 0
Uganda: Ochan - Wadada, Walusimbi (Mawejje 64), Kabugo (Matsiko 46), Kasagga, Agaba, Kisalita, Kayizzi (Muleme 64), Majwega (Nsubuga 79), Mpande, Okwi (Kalanda 46; Mugerwa 86).
Rwanda: Ndayishimye - Bayisenge, Omuburenga, Nirisarike, Mugiraneza (Twagimana 82), Iranze, Niyonzima, Mushniyimana (Butera 88), Ngirishuti, Kagere (Mbaraga 82), Tuyisenge.

Nov 16 - Cardiff
Wales 1 (King 58)
Finland 1 (Riski 90+2)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 11,809. **Ref:** Delferiere (Blg)
Wales: Hennessey - Gunter (Richards 72), N Taylor (B Davies 72), Ledley, Ricketts, A Williams, Allen (Tudur Jones 90), King, Church (Vokes 63), Bale, Robson-Kanu (Cotterill 84).
Finland: Hradecky - Uronen, Ring, Sparv, J Ojala (Toivio 46), Moisander (Pasanen 63), R Eremenko, Schuller (P Hetemaj 70), Pukki (Hamalainen 63), Arkivuo (Lampi 46; Raitala 70), Riski.

Sunday, November 17

Nov 17 - Luxembourg
Luxembourg 1 (Deville 67)
Montenegro 4 (Basa pen 37, Zverotic 58, Jovanovic 69, Cetkovic 82)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 1,775. **Ref:** Welz (Ger)
Luxembourg: Joubert - Martino (Hoffmann 46), Jans, Philipps, Janisch, Laterza (Bastos 46), Mutsch, Gerson, Da Mota (Pedro 46), Joachim, Deville.
Montenegro: Poleksic - Pavicevic (Krkotic 70), Basa, Volkov, Nikolic (Ivanovic 86), Vesovic (Cetkovic 60), Beciraj (Nikac 78), Zverotic (Jovovic 84), Jovanovic (Boljevic 73), Simic, Savic.

Monday, November 18

Nov 18 - St Louis, USA
Argentina 2 (Aguero 40, 66)
Bosnia-Herzegovina 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Jurisevic (USA)
Argentina: Romero - Zabaleta, F Fernandez, Otamendi, Basanta, Rojo, Maxi Rodriguez (Biglia 72), Mascherano, Di Maria (A Fernandez 86), Palacio, Aguero (Lamela 77).
Bosnia-Herzegovina: Begovic - Vrsajevic (Sunjic 73), Bicakcic, Spahic, Kolasinac, Pjanic, Misimovic (Hajrovic 69), Medunjanin, Visca, Dzeko, Ibisevic (Kvrzic 69).

Nov 18 - London
Italy 2 (Rossi 12, Giaccherini 47)
Nigeria 2 (Dike 36, Ameobi 40)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 15,267. **Ref:** Atkinson (Eng)
Italy: Sirigu - Maggio, Ranocchia, Ogbonna, Pasqual, Candreva (Cerci 66), Thiago Motta (Parolo 53), Giaccherini (Poli 76), Montolivo (Pirlo 53), Rossi (Diamanti 53), Balotelli.
Nigeria: Ejide (Enyeama 66) - Kwambe, Egwuekwe, Oboabona, Benjamin, Onazi, Mikel, Dike (Musa 65), Oduamadi (Ogu 46), Moses (Ideye 76), Ameobi (Emenike 65).

Nov 18 - Sousse, Tunisia
Libya 1
Benin 0
HT: 1-0

Nov 18 - Chisinau
Moldova 1 (Ionita 71)
Lithuania 1 (Kalonas 40)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 4,794. **Ref:** Tudor (Rom)
Moldova: Cebanu - Epureanu, Racu, Bordian, Bolohan, Luvannor (Frunza 84), Ionita (Ivanov 89), Antoniuc (Cojocari 66), Sidorenco (Gheorghiev 59), Dedov (Ginsari 64), Gatcan.
Lithuania: Zubas - Borovskij (Cernych 46), Zaliukas, Kijanskas, Andriuskevicius, Mikoliunas (Luksa 72), Vicius (Stankevicius 88), Panka, Kalonas (Chvedukas 84), Petravicius (Freidgeimas 46), Razulis (Valskis 56).

Tuesday, November 19

Nov 19 - Sydney
Australia 1 (Cahill 69)
Costa Rica 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 20,165. **Ref:** Takayama (Jap)
Australia: Ryan - Franjic, Neill, Williams (McGowan 47), Davidson, Jedinak, Milligan (McKay 77), Kruse (Kennedy 77), Bresciano (Rogic 60), Vidosic (Oar 61), Leckie (Cahill 53).
Costa Rica: Pemberton - Umana, Gonzalez, Duarte, Gamboa, Oviedo (Diaz 58), Borges (Granados 71), Cubero (Rodriguez 76), Calvo (Cunningham 46), McDonald (Brenes 46), Campbell (Hernandez 79).

Nov 19 - Vienna
Austria 1 (Janko 33)
United States 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 20,200. **Ref:** Vad (Hun)
Austria: Almer - Garics, Dragovic, Hinteregger, Fuchs, Leitgeb (Wimmer 90+2), Hinterseer (Zulechner 85), Alaba (Ivanschitz 72), Harnik (Klein 81), Arnautovic (Suttner 81), Janko (Kavlak 68).
United States: Howard - Cameron (Lichaj 81), Gonzalez, Brooks, Beasley (Wondolowski 90), Bradley, Jones (Boyd 67), Bedoya (Kljestan 76), Johannsson (Diskerud 56), Shea (E Johnson 56), Altidore.

Nov 19 - Brussels
Belgium 2 (Mirallas 15, Alderweireld 79)
Japan 3 (Kakitani 37, Honda 54, Okazaki 64)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 43,000. **Ref:** Aydinus (Tur)
Belgium: Mignolet - Alderweireld, Van Buyten (Meunier 76), Vermaelen, Vertonghen, Witsel, Dembele (Defour 72), Mirallas, E Hazard (Fellaini 46), Mertens (De Bruyne 62), Lukaku (Vossen 74).
Japan: Kawashima - G Sakai (Konno 83), H Sakai, Yoshida, Hasebe, Honda, Kagawa (Hosogai 81), Morishige, Yamaguchi (Endo 46), Kakitani (Osako 64), Kiyotake (Okazaki 46).

Nov 19 - Toronto, Canada
Brazil 2 (Hulk 14, Robinho 79)
Chile 1 (Vargas 71)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 35,000. **Ref:** Petrescu (Can)
Brazil: Julio Cesar - Maicon, David Luiz, Thiago Silva (Dante 74), Maxwell, Luiz Gustavo, Paulinho (Hernanes 83), Oscar (Willian 64), Neymar (Lucas Leiva 90+3), Hulk (Ramires 64), Jo (Robinho 51).
Chile: Bravo - Medel, M Gonzalez, Jara, Fuenzalida (Valdivia 22; M Fernandez 60), Diaz (Beausejour 8), Carmona, Mena, F Gutierrez (Munoz 86), Vargas, Sanchez.

Nov 19 - London
England 0
Germany 1 (Mertesacker 39)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 85,934. **Ref:** Lannoy (Fra)
England: Hart - Walker, Smalling, Jagielka, A Cole (Gibbs 53), Gerrard (Henderson 56), Cleverley (Wilshere 64), Townsend, Rooney (Barkley 71), Lallana (Lambert 76), Sturridge.
Germany: Weidenfeller - Westermann (Draxler 67), Mertesacker, Boateng (Hummels 46; Howedes 66), Schmelzer (Jansen 46), S Bender, L Bender, Gotze, Kroos, Reus (Schurrle 82), Kruse (Sam 56).

Nov 19 - Faro, Portugal
Gibraltar 0
Slovakia 0
Ref: Miguel (Por)
Gibraltar: Perez - Wiseman, R Chipolina, Higginbotham, R Casciaro, J Chipolina, Lopez (Bado 46), Walker, D Duarte (K Casciaro 56), Guilling (Sergeant 67), Priestley (Greene 67).
Slovakia: Kosicky - Stetina, Salata, Farkas, Juhar, Pecovsky, Guede, Sestak, Jendrisek (Kubik 65), Sylvestr (Ninaj 84), Depetris (Zrelak 65).

Nov 19 - Amsterdam
Holland 0
Colombia 0
Att: 51,000. **Ref:** Meyer (Ger)
Holland: Cillessen - Van der Wiel, Veltman, Vlaar, Blind, Strootman, Schaars (De Guzman 80), Van der Vaart (Fer 45), Lens, S De Jong (Narsingh 44), Depay (Van Aanholt 90). *Sent off: Lens 35min.*
Colombia: Mondragon - S Arias, Valdes, Zapata, Armero, Cuadrado (Martinez 81), Sanchez (Valencia 75), Aguilar (Torres 46), Rodriguez, Falcao (Bacca 87), Gutierrez (Ibarbo 69).

Nov 19 - Houston, USA
Honduras 2 (Costly 62, 66)
Ecuador 2 (J Ayovi 15, E Valencia 88)
HT: 0-1
Honduras: Valladares - Beckeles, Figueroa, Montes, Izaguirre (Bernardez 46), Claros (W Palacios 56), Delgado, M Chavez (A Peralta 70), Najar (Espinoza 46), J Palacios (O Garcia 80), R Martinez (Costly 57).
Ecuador: Banguera - Guagua, Erazo, Paredes, W Ayovi, Ibarra (Ramirez 81), Noboa (Saritama 88), Martinez (E Valencia 72), Castillo (Gaibor 72), A Valencia (Rojas 46), J Ayovi (Montero 58).

been honoured seven times in succession. No other player has won the award more than twice since its inception in 1946.

SWITZERLAND

Winning run ends

A 14-match unbeaten run came to an end as Switzerland lost for the first time since May 2012, going down 2-1 away to South Korea after leading through a goal from Pajtim Kasami.

USA

The best year ever

Despite finishing the year with a 1-0 defeat away to Austria, the USA's 16 wins in 2013 was a national record for a calendar year. In 2013, Jurgen Klinsmann's side qualified for a seventh successive World Cup and won their first CONCACAF Gold Cup title since 2007.

Beaten...USA (in white)

WALES

Coleman to carry on

Chris Coleman, who took charge of the national team in January 2012 following the death of Gary Speed, signed a two-year contract extension that will keep him in charge for the Euro 2016 qualifying campaign.

New deal...Coleman

Nov 19 - Siliguri
India 2 (Chhetri 21, Miranda 49)
Nepal 0
HT: 1-0

Nov 19 - Bishkek
Kyrgyzstan 0
Azerbaijan 0

Nov 19 - Vaduz
Liechtenstein 0
Estonia 3 (Zenjov 45+1, Anier 61, 63)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 684. **Ref:** Reisch (Lux)
Liechtenstein: Jehle (Bicer 46) - Oehri (Yildiz 46), Martin Stocklasa, Kaufmann, Burgmeier, Frick (Gubser 46), Erne (Gur 84), M Buchel (Wolfinger 71), N Hasler, M Christen (T Beck 46), Polverino.
Estonia: Pareiko (Aksalu 46) - Jaager (Kams 20), Reintam, Mets, Teniste, Zenjov (Lindpere 64), Dmitrijev, Vunk, Luts (Kruglov 46), Kink (Mosnikov 72), Hunt (Anier 56).

Nov 19 - Valletta
Malta 3 (R Fenech 17, M Mifsud 20, J Caruana 41)
Faroe Islands 2 (Hansson 80, Baldvinsson 87)
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 500
Malta: Hogg - Failla, J Caruana, A Agius, A Muscat, Briffa (Vella 89), R Fenech, Mintoff, Schembri, Cohen (Scerri 81), M Mifsud.
Faroe Islands: Nielsen - Naes, E Jacobsen, Baldvinsson, P Justinussen, Hansson, Vatnsdal (Lokin 86), Mouritsen (Nattestad 46), Udsen (Joensen 82), K Olsen (Vatnhamar 71), Klettskard.

Nov 19 - Windhoek
Namibia 0
Mozambique 0

Nov 19 - Molde
Norway 0
Scotland 1 (Brown 61)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 9,750. **Ref:** Strombergsson (Swe)
Norway: Nyland - Elabdellaoui (Linnes 60), Reginiussen (Strandberg 64), Forren, Hogli, Skjelbred (Daehli 67), Eikrem (Konradsen 80), Jenssen, Gamst Pedersen, Pedersen (Elyounoussi 87), Kamara (Abdellaoue 46).
Scotland: Marshall - Hutton, Whittaker, Martin, Greer, Adam (McArthur 55), Anya (Conway 51), Bryson (Bannan 46), Brown, Naismith (Berra 90), Snodgrass.

Nov 19 - Poznan
Poland 0
Republic of Ireland 0
Att: 31,094. **Ref:** Trutz (Slk)
Poland: Szczesny - Celeban, Szukala, Kowalczyk, Marciniak, Cwielong (Olkowski 81), Pazdan, Maczynski (Jodlowiec 59), Sobota (Brzyski 81), Blaszczykowski (Robak 89), R Lewandowski (Teodorczyk 59).
Rep Ireland: Forde - Kelly, St Ledger (O'Shea 32), Wilson (Whelan 76), Ward, Walters, McCarthy (Pearce 62), Green, McGeady (McClean 62), Stokes (Doyle 68), Long (Hoolahan 73).

Nov 19 - Dubai, UAE
Russia 2 (Smolov 12, Tarasov 59)
South Korea 1 (Kim Shin-wook 6)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 7,000. **Ref:** Hashmi (UAE)
Russia: Lodygin - Smolnikov (Kozlov 74), Ignashevich, Granat, Kombarov (Eshchenko 57), Tarasov (Grigoryev 74), Fayzulin (Glushakov 57), Shirokov, Samedov, Ryazantsev, Smolov.
South Korea: Jung Sung-ryong - Hong Jeong-ho, Kim Young-gwon, Park Joo-ho, Shin Kwang-hoon, Park Jong-woo, Ki Sung-yeung (Koh Myong-jin 66), Lee Chung-yong (Kim Bo-kyung 59), Son Heung-min (Ji Dong-won 69), Lee Keun-ho, Kim Shin-wook (Nam Tae-hee 46).

Nov 19 - Celje
Slovenia 1 (Birsa 53)
Canada 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 2,500. **Ref:** Gocek (Tur)
Slovenia: Oblak - Milec, Samardzic (Balazic 46), Cesar (Ilic 78), Struna, Kirm (Pecnik 46), Kurtic, Stevanovic, Birsa (Filipovic 60), Bezjak (Beric 67), Dedic (Lazarevic 46).
Canada: Stamatopoulos - Ledgerwood (Osorio 68), Henry, Hainault, Straith (Ouimette 86), De Jong (Bekker 68), Cebara (Attakora 46), Pacheco, De Rosario, Ricketts (Morgan 46), Porter (Nakajima-Farran 46).

Nov 19 - Johannesburg
South Africa 1 (Parker 56)
Spain 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 36,000. **Ref:** Koto (Les)
South Africa: Khune - Ngongca, Khumalo (Xulu 46), Nthethe, Matlaba, Furman, Jali (Mokotjo 49), Claasen (Tshabalala 46), Manyisa (Zungu 61), Parker (Patosi 90+2), Rantie.
Spain: Casillas (Valdes 46; Reina 80) - Arbeloa, Albiol, Sergio Ramos, Monreal, Xabi Alonso (Mata 61), Busquets, Iniesta (Koke 74), Pedro (Jesus Navas 61), Llorente (Cazorla 46), Villa (Negredo 56).

Nov 19 - Dar es Salaam
Tanzania 0
Zimbabwe 0

Nov 19 - Port of Spain
Trinidad & Tobago 2 (Guerra 49, K Jones pen 73)
Jamaica 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Wijngaarde (Sur)
Trinidad & Tobago: J-M Williams - C Edwards (Gonzales 87), Cyrus, C Mitchell (Abu Bakr 73), David, Birchall (K George 69), Boucaud (Theobald 82), Peltier (Winchester 25), Guerra, J Jones, K Jones (Caesar 78).
Jamaica: McCallum - A Reid, Powell, Edwards (Dicoy Williams 46), Watson, Jason Johnson (B Brown 46), Woozencraft, O Daley, Lawrence, Seaton (Mattocks 46; Anderson 58), D Brown (Vanzie 84).

Nov 19 - Mersin
Turkey 2 (Umut 4, Burak 88)
Belarus 1 (Rodionov 10)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Mateu Lahoz (Spa)
Turkey: Tolga - Aykut, Bilal (Burak 71), Gokhan Gonul, Ozyakup (Aytac 46), Umut (Gokhan Tore 46), Arda, Caner (Sercan 88), Erdinc (Ugur 83), Adem (Olcay 46), Ersan.
Belarus: Gutor - Martynovich, Bordachev, Veretsilo (Olekhnovich 67), Filipenko, Balanovich (Krivets 83), Dragun (Kislyak 67), Kalachev, Tigorev (Aleksiyevich 90+1), A Hleb, Rodionov (Putsilo 76).

UNDER-17 WORLD CUP

In the United Arab Emirates

Group A
Oct 17: Brazil 6 Slovakia 1; UAE 1 Honduras 2.
Oct 20: Slovakia 2 Honduras 2; UAE 1 Brazil 6.
Oct 23: Slovakia 2 UAE 0; Honduras 0 Brazil 3.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brazil (Q)	3	3	0	0	15	2	9
Honduras (Q)	3	1	1	1	4	6	4
Slovakia (Q)	3	1	1	1	5	8	4
UAE	3	0	0	3	2	10	0

Group B
Oct 17: Uruguay 7 New Zealand 0; Ivory Coast 0 Italy 1.
Oct 20: Uruguay 1 Ivory Coast 1; Italy 1 New Zealand 0.
Oct 23: New Zealand 0 Ivory Coast 3; Italy 1 Uruguay 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Uruguay (Q)	3	2	1	0	10	2	7
Italy (Q)	3	2	0	1	3	2	6
Ivory Coast (Q)	3	1	1	1	4	2	4
New Zealand	3	0	0	3	0	11	0

Group C
Oct 18: Croatia 1 Morocco 3; Panama 0 Uzbekistan 2.
Oct 21: Croatia 1 Panama 0; Uzbekistan 0 Morocco 0.
Oct 24: Uzbekistan 2 Croatia 1; Morocco 4 Panama 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Morocco (Q)	3	2	1	0	7	3	7
Uzbekistan (Q)	3	2	1	0	4	1	7
Croatia	3	1	0	2	3	5	3
Panama	3	0	0	3	2	7	0

Group D
Oct 18: Tunisia 2 Venezuela 1; Russia 0 Japan 1.
Oct 21: Tunisia 1 Russia 0; Japan 3 Venezuela 1.
Oct 24: Venezuela 0 Russia 4; Japan 2 Tunisia 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Japan (Q)	3	3	0	0	6	2	9
Tunisia (Q)	3	2	0	1	4	3	6
Russia (Q)	3	1	0	2	4	2	3
Venezuela	3	0	0	3	2	9	0

Group E
Oct 19: Canada 2 Austria 2; Iran 1 Argentina 1.
Oct 22: Canada 1 Iran 1; Argentina 3 Austria 2.
Oct 25: Argentina 3 Canada 0; Austria 0 Iran 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Argentina (Q)	3	2	1	0	7	3	7
Iran (Q)	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
Canada	3	0	2	1	3	6	2
Austria	3	0	1	2	4	6	1

Group F
Oct 19: Mexico 1 Nigeria 6; Iraq 1 Sweden 4.
Oct 22: Mexico 3 Iraq 1; Sweden 3 Nigeria 3.
Oct 25: Nigeria 5 Iraq 0; Sweden 0 Mexico 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nigeria (Q)	3	2	1	0	14	4	7
Mexico (Q)	3	2	0	1	5	7	6
Sweden (Q)	3	1	1	1	7	5	4
Iraq	3	0	0	3	2	12	0

Top 2 in each group and the 4 3rd-placed teams with the best record qualified for 1st knockout round

1st knockout round

Oct 28: Italy 0 Mexico 2; Japan 1 Sweden 2; Brazil 3 Russia 1; Honduras 1 Uzbekistan 0.
Oct 29: Uruguay 4 Slovakia 2; Morocco 1 Ivory Coast 2; Argentina 3 Tunisia 1; Nigeria 4 Iran 1.

Quarter-finals

Nov 1: Honduras 1 Sweden 2; Brazil 1 Mexico 1 (Mexico 11-10 on pens).
Nov 2: Argentina 2 Ivory Coast 1; Uruguay 0 Nigeria 2.

Semi-finals

Nov 5: Argentina 0 Mexico 3; Sweden 0 Nigeria 3.

3rd-place match

Nov 8: Sweden 4 Argentina 1.

Final

Nov 8 - Abu Dhabi
Nigeria 3 (Aguirre og 9, Iheanacho 56, Muhammed 81)
Mexico 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 20,018. **Ref:** Thomson (Sco)
Nigeria: Alampasu - Muhammed, Okon, Idowu, Aliyu Abubakar, Alfa (Ezeh 80), Iheanacho, Yahaya, Nwakali, Awoniyi, Bello.
Mexico: Gudino - Wbias, Teran, Rodriguez, L Hernandez (Tovar 46), Diaz, Ochoa, Aguirre, Rivas, Govea (E Hernandez 68), Jaimes (Granados 60).

Previous winners

1985[1]	Nigeria
1987[1]	Soviet Union
1989[1]	Saudi Arabia
1991	Ghana
1993	Nigeria
1995	Ghana
1997	Brazil
1999	Brazil
2001	France
2003	Brazil
2005	Mexico
2007	Nigeria
2009	Switzerland
2011	Mexico

[1]Age limit was 16 for the 1985, 1987 and 1989 tournaments

UNDER-17 WORLD CUP

Record-breaking juniors...Nigeria celebrate winning the Under-17 World Cup for an unprecedented fourth time, adding 2013 to their previous triumphs in 1985, 1993 and 2007

'Golden Eaglets' soar to victory in UAE

Nigerian football is on a roll. After the senior side won the African Nations Cup in February – and just before they confirmed their place at next year's World Cup finals in Brazil – the "Golden Eaglets" flew away with the under-17 world crown in the United Arab Emirates.

The lithe, skilful Nigerians beat Mexico 3-0 in the Final to win the tournament for a fourth time and move one ahead of Brazil, who lost to the eventual runners-up in the quarter-finals. Sweden took third place on their debut appearance in these finals with a victory over Argentina, who faded away as their engine wound down and they lost more and more players to injuries and suspensions.

Danger...Nigeria's Musa Yahaya is crowded out by Mexico defenders in the Final at the Mohammed Bin Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi

The perennial issue of over-age players cropped up, with most of the fingers pointed at the Nigerians – who certainly have history, but were probably comparatively innocent this time.

One fascination for the Europeans, both playing and watching, was the referees' use of vanishing spray at free-kicks around the penalty area.

The spray is in common use these days across Latin America and was also trialled at the 2013 Under-20 finals in Turkey. While several European referees were initially sceptical, they did grow to appreciate the certainty and obedience it engenders. The spray will be used again at the Club World Cup in Morocco, with FIFA's executive committee then making a decision on its potential use in Brazil next summer.

Although Brazil did not go into these finals as South American champions, they were by far their

continent's best side, with centre-forward Mosquito, support striker Nathan, goal-scoring winger Boschilia and a midfield anchor Danilo all outstanding.

They took Slovakia apart 6-1 in their opening game in Group A, with a hat-trick from Mosquito and two goals from Nathan, and scored a further nine goals in their next two games to qualify with ease. Honduras went through in second place by virtue of their opening 2-1 win against the UAE. It may have been their only group win but progress to the knockout stage was deserved reward for a squad full of character and superbly led by coach Jose Valladares.

Uruguay began with a 7-0 thrashing of New Zealand and had several talented individuals, such as eel-like forwards Leandro Otormin and Franco Acosta, who both played their part in a concluding 2-1 win against Italy.

For the "*Azzurrini*", Luca Vido looked good and Simone Scuffet was a secure goalkeeper, but they lacked threat up front and finished second in the group, with a very physical Ivory Coast in third.

Major disappointment

Group C provided the major disappointment in Croatia. A squad built around the young talents of Dinamo Zagreb failed to react after an opening 3-1 defeat by lively Morocco. They scrambled a 1-0 win over Panama but then lost 2-1 to the well-organised Uzbekistan, who qualified with Morocco.

Dinamo Zagreb's Alen Halilovic was the biggest let-down although, to be fair, the attacking midfielder looked tired after a year in which he made his senior international debut. Even so, the army of scouts in UAE went away with reservations while coach Ivan Gudelj returned home to the sack.

Russia were almost as disappointing. They scraped through Group D, in which Japan played a fascinating Barcelona-style pass-and-move game that is characteristic of all the country's academy graduates, both male and female. Japan's coach, Hirofumi Yoshitake, explained that he waited to judge all of his players' moods on the morning of a game before deciding his line-up. In the event he rung wholesale changes for every match – and that absence of personal momentum may, perhaps, have been their downfall in the end.

Drama...Mexico players look on as they face Brazil in a penalty shoot-out following their 1-1 draw in the quarter-finals

Hat-trick hero...Mosquito (no9) was on target three times in Brazil's opening game

Group E was won impressively by a physical Argentina side who looked full of running early in the competition. Indeed, considering the 30 degree heat and the humidity, the physical commitment and pace of all the teams was both remarkable and thought-provoking with Qatar 2022 in mind.

Finally, Group F began in explosive style with Nigeria thrashing Mexico 6-1, while surprise package Sweden were inspired to a 4-1 opening victory over Iraq by their outstanding goalkeeper, Sixten Mohlen.

Sweden's Valmir Berisha finished up as the tournament top scorer, with seven goals, while coach Roland Larsson also fielded twin defenders in Johan and Sebastian Ramhorn.

After their opening-game shock, Mexico maintained their revival in the round of 16 by seeing off Italy's powder-puff attack, while Brazil, Honduras, Uruguay and Argentina maintained South America's five-strong progress. However, only two of them remained after the quarter-finals.

Mexico beat Brazil 11-10 in a superb penalty shoot-out in which only two spot-kicks were missed – the decisive, last one by Nathan – to reach the semi-finals, along with Sweden who saw off Honduras, Nigeria who beat Uruguay and Argentina who overcame the Ivory Coast.

Mexico and Nigeria both booked their place in the Final with 3-0 victories, against Argentina and Sweden respectively, to set up a rematch of their opening group game.

The Final started at a lively pace, with three good goalscoring opportunities in the opening eight minutes. The deadlock was finally broken when Mexico's Erick Aguirre turned the ball into his own net as Kelechi Iheanacho was about to shoot.

Despite that early setback, Mexico stuck to their task. But the start of the second half saw "*El Tri*" fall further behind when Mexico keeper Raul Gudino could only palm out an angled drive by Nigeria captain Musa Muhammed and Iheanacho put his sixth goal of the finals into an empty net. Iheanacho, who was named the tournament's best player, scored five of his goals against Mexico.

With nine minutes remaining, Muhammed added a third as Nigeria surpassed Germany's previous record of scoring 25 goals in a single edition of an Under-17 World Cup finals.

Nigeria coach Manu Garba, whose staff was packed with former internationals, said: "This is one of my greatest achievements in life. When we won in Korea 2007 I was the assistant coach, but this time around I am the overall boss and to win a World Cup is the ultimate in football."

Keir Radnedge

• *See page 89 for full details*

NORWAY: TIPPELIGAEN

At last...Stromsgodset won the Norwegian league title for only the second time in their 106-year history, having previously been crowned champions in 1970

Title glory for attack-minded Deila

After 43 years, Stromsgodset finally claimed their second Norwegian championship, mostly thanks to a home record that saw them win 13 of their 15 league games at their modest 7,500-capacity Marienlyst Stadion in Drammen.

Ronny Deila, in his sixth season as coach, saw his Stromsgodset side outscore everyone else, with 66 in 30 games, and while Ola Kamara scored 11 (in only 14 matches) the rest of the goals were spread around the team.

Deila's team is a blend of experience in the shape of thirtysomethings Oyvind Storflor, Jarl Andre Storbaek and Peter Kovacs with younger talent such as Kamara, Stefan Johansen and Muhamed Keita.

While Christian Gamboa and Tore Reginiussen were reliable at the back for Rosenborg, and Mike Jensen provided some spark in midfield, it was a lack of goals that saw coach Per Joar Hansen's side finish a point adrift in second place. His forward line of Alexander Soderlund, John Chibuike and Nicki Bille Nielsen misfired on too many occasions despite their team-mates creating plenty of chances.

And although Haugesund claimed third place and a Europa League spot, fourth was enough to earn Aalesund coach Jan Jonsson plaudits for his side's attacking football and a two-year extension to his contract.

Defending champions Molde never looked like making it three in a row as Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's team got the season off to a dismal start and found themselves rooted in the relegation zone before recovering to finish sixth. They did, however, rescue their season and claim a place in next season's Europa League with a 4-2 victory over Rosenborg in the Norwegian Cup Final.

After finishing fourth last season, Tromso were a huge disappointment this time round and were relegated, along with Honefoss. Steinar Nilssen took over from Agnar Christensen as coach in October but he was unable to turn narrow defeats into victories despite some acceptable performances in the Europa League.

Bodo/Glimt and Stabaek were promoted from the second tier.

Sigurd Odegaard

For final league table, go to page 101

> "I am the sort of coach that likes to play attacking football. I would rather win 5-4 than 1-0"
> **Stromsgodset's Ronny Deila**

PLAYER OF THE SEASON
STEFAN JOHANSEN
(Stromsgodset)
Midfielder renowned for his creativity and ability to thread passes through to the forward line. Won his first caps for Norway and has since established himself.

COACH OF THE SEASON
RONNY DEILA (Stromsgodset)
Stuck to his playing system, advocating attacking football, while still bringing through young players.

NEWCOMER OF THE SEASON
MATS MOLLER DAEHLI (Molde)
The 18-year-old, who came through the academy at Manchester United, won his first international cap and showed glimpses of talent when coming on in a couple of friendlies.

Creative...Johansen won his first caps

WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

AFRICA
Return of the five

Victory dash...Bougherra (far left) leads the celebrations after scoring the goal that took Algeria back to the World Cup finals

Despite Sepp Blatter's insistence that the format should go, Africa's use of a final round of play-offs for the first time since the preliminaries of the 1990 World Cup proved a perfect antidote to a relatively sedate group phase.

Two decades ago, the games were overshadowed by the brutality of the clash between north African rivals Algeria and Egypt, but this time they did no more than confirm that the continent will send back to the World Cup finals the same five countries that came through the preliminaries for 2010.

The 10 group winners had been drawn into five play-off matches for direct progress to Brazil and the ties were played with almost a month between the first and second legs.

Nigeria were the first to qualify, followed by Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Ghana and, finally, Algeria in arguably the only tie that proved keenly contested.

The Algerians were forced to come from behind to edge out Burkina Faso on the away-goals rule and end a fairy-tale year for the "land of the upright man", but Ghana, Ivory Coast and Nigeria were sure bets after their first legs, while home advantage saw Cameroon through too.

> "[Are we going] to make an impression at the World Cup? No, we can actually win it"
>
> Nigeria goalkeeper Vincent Enyeama

Leading lights

Having emerged from a long-term slump to earn a surprise berth at the 2010 World Cup, Algeria have now returned to a prominent place among the leading lights of African football.

They have been highly ranked for much of the last 24 months, although hopes that they would turn that computer-generated assessment of their potential into reality at the African Nations Cup finals were replaced by deep disappointment at the start of 2013 when they did not make it to the knockout stage.

However, coach Vahid Halilhodzic improved his squad throughout the year and the Algerians did not deserve to lose in Ouagadougou in the first leg of the play-offs, with an extremely dubious penalty decision sealing their 3-2 defeat.

Algeria, as is their want, made heavy work of the return in Blida before Madjid Bougherra scrambled home a corner for a 1-0 win. The Burkinabe were denied a first-ever World Cup trip by a few centimetres when they hit the woodwork in the last minute.

Both Cameroon and Tunisia benefited from group opponents having points docked for fielding ineligible players – without which it is unlikely that either would have made the play-offs.

For all that, Cameroon saved their first convincing display in almost two years for when it mattered most to thrash Tunisia 4-1 at home after a goalless draw in the first leg.

Samuel Eto'o made another bizarre accusation against his team-mates before the second leg in Yaounde, claiming there was a conspiracy not to pass to him. But if he saw less of the ball than usual it was because he was often to be found at right-back, flitting around the pitch in a free role while the rest of the team got on with the business of qualifying.

Yaounde remains a fortress for the "Indomitable Lions" who have not lost a competitive match there since 1975. They are now heading for an African record seventh World Cup finals.

Ghana were the most emphatic of the qualifiers with a 6-1 thrashing of Egypt in Kumasi that is still reverberating around the continent. It was a highly polished performance that once again dashed the Egyptian dream and has since cost their American coach Bob Bradley his job.

Egypt gained a consolation

Heads up...Jean Makoun rises highest to score for Cameroon in the 4-1 win over Tunisia

WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS
AFRICA

2-1 win in the second leg, but the tie had long since lost its edge after the one-sided nature of the first game, where Michael Essien was a powerhouse for Ghana.

His attacking forays could not be contained as he belied opinion that he has never been the same player for Chelsea, Real Madrid or his country since being blighted by injuries over the past few seasons.

It was plain sailing, too, for Nigeria after Emmanuel Eminike's late penalty secured a 2-1 win over Ethiopia in the first leg in Addis Ababa. Victor Moses and Victor Obinna, with a swerving long-range free-kick, wrapped it up in Calabar in the return.

Ivory Coast, patently the better team against Senegal, were 3-0 up and cruising in the home leg when Papiss Cisse pulled back a late consolation goal that came close to providing the platform for a remarkable fightback.

Senegal supporters were pessimistic about their team's chances of turning things around, especially given that they had forfeited home advantage in the return because of a ban on their stadium in Dakar, and had to take the match to Casablanca instead.

Yet they were unusually dogged and eventually they got the goal they deserved – albeit from another dubious penalty 13 minutes from time, which Moussa Sow converted. Senegalese hopes soared as at 3-2 down on aggregate they needed only one more to go through on away goals.

They piled on the pressure in the last 10 minutes but, try as they might, they could not create a meaningful opening until deep into stoppage time when they forced a series of corners, the last of which presented substitute Mame Biriam Diouf with a close-range chance that he fluffed.

To add further insult to injury, the Ivorians then broke away on the counter to equalise through Salomon Kalou with the last kick of the game and go through 4-2 on aggregate.

Mark Gleeson

Hope gone...Egypt met Ghana in Cairo

EUROPE
Ronaldo wins battle of the egos

It was you or me...Ronaldo (right) commiserates with Ibrahimovic after Portugal's victory in Solna

It was billed as the battle of the egos, Cristiano versus Zlatan, and it did not disappoint. Despite the best efforts of Zlatan Ibrahimovic to drag Sweden back into contention in the World Cup play-off second leg in Solna, a hat-trick from Cristiano Ronaldo propelled Portugal to the finals.

Portugal had narrowly missed out on automatic qualification after finishing a point behind Russia in their qualifying group, whereas Sweden were eight points behind Germany.

In the first leg in Lisbon, Portugal's central defenders, Bruno Alves and Pepe, successfully restricted the influence of Ibrahimovic, while at the opposite end Ronaldo worked hard to fashion opportunities for the home side. The Real Madrid forward's diving header in the final minutes gave Portugal a narrow 1-0 lead to take home for the return – the second half of which proved as dramatic as could be wished for.

The tie was still in the balance when Ronaldo ran on to a brilliant pass from Joao Moutinho to score a crucial away goal that appeared to put Portugal's place in the finals beyond doubt. But Ibrahimovic was not about to let it happen without a fight. He stirred a comeback, first by heading in from

a corner then by firing a free-kick through Portugal's defensive wall.

Just as Swedish fans sensed a remarkable comeback was possible, Ronaldo scored his second of the game, firing home from a tight angle after a swift counter-attack. Another wonderful pass from Moutinho set him up for his hat-trick – and his fourth goal over the two legs – as Portugal secured a memorable 4-2 aggregate victory.

So Ronaldo and his team-mates would be going to the ball in Brazil after all – leaving Ibrahimovic to lament that "a World Cup without me is not something I'm going to follow".

Epic recovery

Over in Paris, the epic recovery by France against Ukraine (see *Dispatches*, page 36) ensured that Franck Ribery et al would be joining Portugal at the finals.

Iceland's bid to become the smallest country to qualify for the World Cup was ended by Croatia, whose celebrations were overshadowed by the post-match behaviour of Josip Simunic (see *Dispatches*, page 42).

In the fourth of the European play-offs, Greece qualified for the finals for the third time (after 1994 and 2010) following a 4-2 aggregate victory over Romania.

Olympiakos striker Kostas Mitroglou (see *Talent Scout*, page 72) was the star of the opening leg, scoring in each half as Fernando Santos' side won 3-1. He was on target again in the return in Bucharest, putting the tie beyond doubt with a run and low shot midway through the first half.

We're off to the party...Greece coach Santos celebrates after his side earn their finals place with a 1-1 draw in Romania

> "I know Portugal needed me in these matches and I showed I am here. I just did my work as I have been doing lately"
>
> Cristiano Ronaldo

Vasilis Torosidis put through his own goal early in the second half but Romania, who had made a number of changes for the second leg, including the return of captain Vlad Chiriches, a mask protecting his broken nose, never looked likely to overturn Greece's lead.

Santos, who spoke Greek in public for the first time since taking over the national team three years ago, told the media afterwards: "There are three things. First I say 'thank you, and thank God.' Second, I congratulate my players for two fantastic games. And third this victory is for the Greek people. Thank you very much, we are going to Brazil.

"The Greeks have been so warm to me, so welcoming. It feels great to give them some joy and hope that things will get better for the country. It is a great thing for Greece that we are going to our second consecutive World Cup... and certainly this is a huge moment for me, personally."

John Holmesdale

INTER-CONTINENTAL

Uruguay and Mexico go through

JORDAN'S hopes of a first qualification were shattered by Uruguay in the Asia-CONMEBOL play-off. The Jordanians' fate was sealed in the first leg in Amman, where the 2010 World Cup semi-finalists proved far too strong as they strolled to a 5-0 victory.

The ease of it all surprised coach Oscar Tabarez, who said: "I expected my team would face difficulties and win, but not with that number of goals." The return in Montevideo ended goalless, although Uruguay, who finished fifth in the South American qualifying section, again dominated.

In the other intercontinental play-off, between fourth-placed CONCACAF side Mexico and Oceania group winners New Zealand, the Mexicans finally found some form after months of poor results (see *Dispatches*, page 44). They followed up a 5-1 first-leg romp with a 4-2 victory in Wellington, prompting New Zealand coach Ricki Herbert to announce his resignation after eight years in charge.

John Holmesdale

Power...Rafael Marquez (left) heads home during Mexico's first leg win over New Zealand

ESM TEAM OF THE MONTH NOVEMBER 2013

European Sports Media

HOW IT WORKS

Every month, journalists from each member of the European Sports Media group select their first XI based on the best individual performances from Europe's top competitions. For details of how each ESM member voted, visit worldsoccer.com/esm11

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Sport Express (Russia)
De Telegraaf (Holland)
TIPSbladet (Denmark)
World Soccer (England)

More details of votes at worldsoccer.com/votes

SEASON RANKINGS

Cumulative votes through the season

GOALKEEPERS

Manuel Neuer (Bayern Munich)	6
Morgan De Sanctis (Roma)	4
Gianluigi Buffon (Juventus)	3
Thibaut Courtois (Atletico Madrid)	3
Vincent Enyeama (Lille)	3
Victor Valdes (Barcelona)	3
Artur Boruc (Southampton)	2
Hugo Lloris (Tottenham Hotspur)	2
Roman Weidenfeller (Borussia Dortmund)	2
Samir Handanovic (Internazionale)	1
Helton (Porto)	1
Tim Krul (Newcastle United)	1
Bernd Leno (Bayer Leverkusen)	1
Pepe Reina (Napoli)	1
Wojciech Szczesny (Arsenal)	1

DEFENDERS

David Alaba (Bayern Munich)	13
Mehdi Benatia (Roma)	10
Dante (Bayern Munich)	10
Mats Hummels (Borussia Dortmund)	7
Gerard Pique (Barcelona)	7
Filipe Luis (Atletico Madrid)	5
Per Mertesacker (Arsenal)	5
Federico Balzaretti (Roma)	4
Jerome Boateng (Bayern Munich)	4
Marquinhos (Paris Saint-Germain)	4
Gregory Van der Wiel (Paris Saint-Germain)	4
Dani Alves (Barcelona)	3
Andrea Barzagli (Juventus)	3
Diego Godin (Atletico Madrid)	3
Laurent Koscielny (Arsenal)	3
Bacary Sagna (Arsenal)	3
Mamadou Sakho (Liverpool)	3
Leighton Baines (Everton)	2
Leandro Castan (Roma)	2
Patrice Evra (Manchester United)	2
Fabinho (Monaco)	2
Kevin Grosskreutz (Borussia Dortmund)	2
Juanfran (Atletico Madrid)	2
Simon Kjaer (Lille)	2
Pepe (Real Madrid)	2
Adriano (Barcelona)	1
Alvaro Arbeloa (Real Madrid)	1
Sebastien Boenisch (Bayer Leverkusen)	1
Leonardo Bonucci (Juventus)	1
Gary Cahill (Chelsea)	1
Paolo Cannavaro (Napoli)	1
Giorgio Chiellini (Juventus)	1
Gael Clichy (Manchester City)	1
Lorenzo De Silvestri (Sampdoria)	1
Mathieu Debuchy (Newcastle United)	1
Kieran Gibbs (Arsenal)	1
Branislav Ivanovic (Chelsea)	1
Vincent Kompany (Manchester City)	1
Layvin Kurzawa (Monaco)	1
Maicon (Roma)	1
Marcelo (Real Madrid)	1
Miranda (Atletico Madrid)	1
Andrea Ranocchia (Internazionale)	1
Thiago Silva (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
Dario Srna (Shakhtar Donetsk)	1
Neven Subotic (Borussia Dortmund)	1
Kyle Walker (Tottenham Hotspur)	1
Kurt Zouma (Saint-Etienne)	1

MIDFIELDERS

Aaron Ramsey (Arsenal)	16
Mesut Ozil (Arsenal)	15
Philipp Lahm (Bayern Munich)	12
Paul Pogba (Juventus)	6
Franck Ribery (Bayern Munich)	6
Arturo Vidal (Juventus)	5
Daniele De Rossi (Roma)	4
Isco (Real Madrid)	4
Miralem Pjanic (Roma)	4
Marco Reus (Borussia Dortmund)	4
Arjen Robben (Bayern Munich)	4
Yaya Toure (Manchester City)	3
Jack Wilshere (Arsenal)	3
Cesc Fabregas (Barcelona)	2
Raul Garcia (Atletico Madrid)	2
Mario Gotze (Bayern Munich)	2
Jesus Navas (Manchester City)	2
Koke (Atletico Madrid)	2
Henrikh Mkhitaryan (Borussia Dortmund)	2
Nuri Sahin (Borussia Dortmund)	2
Kevin Strootman (Roma)	2
Marco Verratti (Paris Saint-Germain)	2
Emre Can (Bayer Leverkusen)	1
Angel Di Maria (Real Madrid)	1
Christian Eriksen (Tottenham Hotspur)	1
Marek Hamsik (Napoli)	1
Eden Hazard (Chelsea)	1
Andres Iniesta (Barcelona)	1
Thomas Muller (Bayern Munich)	1
Oscar (Chelsea)	1
Andrea Pirlo (Juventus)	1
Nuri Sahin (Borussia Dortmund)	1
Mohamed Salah (Basle)	1
Bastian Schweinsteiger (Bayern Munich)	1
Oliver Torres (Atletico Madrid)	1

FORWARDS

Zlatan Ibrahimovic (Paris Saint-Germain)	22
Cristiano Ronaldo (Real Madrid)	20
Diego Costa (Atletico Madrid)	16
Lionel Messi (Barcelona)	11
Sergio Aguero (Manchester City)	6
Luis Suarez (Liverpool)	6
Radamel Falcao (Monaco)	5
Wayne Rooney (Manchester United)	3
Francesco Totti (Roma)	3
Kostas Mitroglou (Olympiakos)	2
Neymar (Barcelona)	2
Alexis Sanchez (Barcelona)	2
Ricardo Alvarez (Internazionale)	1
Edinson Cavani (Paris Saint-Germain)	1
Olivier Giroud (Arsenal)	1
Robert Lewandowski (Borussia Dortmund)	1
Pedro (Barcelona)	1
Daniel Sturridge (Liverpool)	1
Fernando Torres (Chelsea)	1

8 consecutive Belarusian league titles won by BATE Borisov

BULGARIA

Food for thought

A CSKA Sofia supporter went on hunger strike in an attempt to get one of the country's leading referees banned for life.

Match official Stanislav Todorov had already been suspended by his federation after a poor performance in Cherno More Varna's 2-1 win against CSKA. But Boris Borisov wants the 37-year-old Todorov kicked out of the game for good.

"There's no place for this referee in the Bulgarian football," says the CSKA fan.

ENGLAND

Jack quickest ever

Jack Wilshere's goal after less than 30 seconds in Arsenal's 2-0 win against Marseille was the fastest-ever by an Englishman in the Champions League.

Manchester United's 5-0 victory at Bayer Leverkusen was their biggest away from home in Europe's top club competition for 56 years.

Fastest Englishman...Wilshere

ESTONIA

Flora miss out

For the first time in 20 years, Flora will not play in European competition next season, after finishing fourth in the Meistriliiga, 23 points adrift of Levadia, who won the league for an eighth time.

Relegated Kuressaare will be replaced by Johvi Lokomotiv next term.

Club Results

EUROPE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A

Nov 27

Bayer Leverkusen (Ger) 0
Manchester United (Eng) 5 (Valencia 22, Spahic og 30, Evans 66, Smalling 77, Nani 88)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 29,412. **Ref:** Moen (Nor)
Leverkusen: Leno - Donati, Toprak, Spahic, Can, Reinartz (Hegeler 70), Bender (Kohr 81), Rolfes, Castro, Son (Derdiyok 70), Kiessling.
Man Utd: De Gea - Smalling, Ferdinand, Evans, Evra (Buttner 70), Jones, Giggs, Valencia (Young 79), Nani, Kagawa, Rooney (Anderson 80).

Nov 27

Shakhtar Donetsk (Ukr) 4 (Luiz Adriano 37, Alex Teixeira 48, Douglas Costa 68, 87)
Real Sociedad (Spa) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 44,348. **Ref:** Benquerenca (Por)
Shakhtar: Pyatov - Srna, Rakytskyi, Kucher, Shevchuk, Fred, Stepanenko, Douglas Costa, Alex Teixeira (Eduardo 75), Bernard (Taison 69), Luiz Adriano (Ferreyra 72).
Sociedad: Bravo - Cadamuro, Ansotegi, Inigo Martinez, De la Bella, Ruben Pardo (Javi Ros 68), Elustondo, Xabi Prieto, Castro, Vela (Seferovic 74), Griezmann (Agirretxe 74).

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man United (Q)	5	3	2	0	11	3	11
Shakhtar	5	2	2	1	7	5	8
Leverkusen	5	2	1	2	8	10	7
Sociedad	5	0	1	4	1	9	1

Group B

Nov 27

Juventus (Ita) 3 (Vidal pen 29, pen 61, 63)
Copenhagen (Den) 1 (Mellberg 56)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 39,506. **Ref:** Eriksson (Swe)
Juventus: Buffon - Caceres, Bonucci, Chiellini, Padoin (Marchisio 69), Vidal (Ogbonna 83), Pirlo, Pogba, Asamoah, Tevez (Vucinic 81), Llorente.
Copenhagen: Wiland - Jacobsen, Mellberg, Sigurdsson, Bengtsson, Claudemir, Delaney (Amankwaa 76), Bolanos (Kristensen 61), Gislason, Toutouh (Pourie 81), Jorgensen.

Nov 27

Real Madrid (Spa) 4 (Bale 37, Arbeloa 51, Di Maria 63, Isco 81)
Galatasaray (Tur) 1 (Umut 38)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 67,728. **Ref:** Collum (Sco)
Real Madrid: Casillas - Arbeloa, Sergio Ramos, Pepe, Marcelo (Carvajal 74), Casemiro (Xabi Alonso 58), Illarramendi, Bale, Isco, Di Maria, Jese (Nacho 28). *Sent off: Sergio Ramos 26min.*
Galatasaray: Eray - Eboue, Gokhan, Chedjou, Nounkeu, Felipe Melo (Gulselam 88), Selcuk, Bruma (Sneijder 64), Umut, Amrabat (Riera 67), Drogba.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid (Q)	5	4	1	0	18	5	13
Juventus	5	1	3	1	9	8	6
Galatasaray	5	1	1	3	7	14	4
Copenhagen	5	1	1	3	4	11	4

Group C

Nov 27

Anderlecht (Blg) 2 (Mbemba 18, Bruno 77)
Benfica (Por) 3 (Matic 34, Mbemba og 52, Rodrigo 90)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 16,780. **Ref:** Orsato (Ita)
Anderlecht: Proto - Vanden Borre, Mbemba, Nuytinck (Vargas 73), Deschacht (Acheampong 55), Gillet, Kouyate, N'Sakala, Bruno, Mitrovic, Praet.
Benfica: Artur - Pereira, Luisao, Garay, Andre Almeida, Matic, Perez (Rodrigo 87), Markovic (Ivan Cavaleiro 89), Fejsa, Gaitan (Sulejmani 72), Lima.

Nov 27

Paris Saint-Germain (Fra) 2 (Ibrahimovic 7, Cavani 90)
Olympiakos (Gre) 1 (Manolas 80)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 44,466. **Ref:** Thomson (Sco)
PSG: Sirigu - Van der Wiel, Alex, Thiago Silva, Maxwell, Verratti, Thiago Motta, Matuidi (Lucas Moura 86), Cavani, Ibrahimovic (Marquinhos 79), Lavezzi (Rabiot 50). *Sent off: Verratti 46min.*
Olympiakos: Roberto - Leandro Salino (Dominguez 57), Manolas, Siovas, Bong (Weiss 46), Maniatis, Samaris, Campbell (Saviola 77), David Fuster, Holebas, Mitroglou.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PSG (Q)	5	4	1	0	15	3	13
Olympiakos	5	2	1	2	7	7	7
Benfica	5	2	1	2	6	7	7
Anderlecht	5	0	1	4	3	14	1

Group D

Nov 27

CSKA Moscow (Rus) 1 (Honda pen 62)
Bayern Munich (Ger) 3 (Robben 17, Gotze 56, Muller pen 65)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 14,000. **Ref:** Gautier (Fra)
CSKA: Akinfeev - Nababkin, A Berezutsky, Ignashevich, Schennikov, Wernbloom, Milanov (Vitinho 90), Tosic, Honda, Zuber (Elm 69), Musa (Bazelyuk 80).
Bayern: Neuer - Rafinha, Boateng, Dante, Alaba, Javi Martinez (Kirchhoff 80), Muller, Lahm (Thiago 28), Kroos, Robben, Gotze (Green 88).

Nov 27

Manchester City (Eng) 4 (Aguero pen 33, Nasri 65, Negredo 78, Dzeko 89)
Viktoria Plzen (CzR) 2 (Horava 43, Tecl 69)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 37,742. **Ref:** Aydinus (Tur)
Man City: Hart - Richards, Demichelis, Lescott, Kolarov, Milner, Javi Garcia, Fernandinho (Toure 64), Nasri (Negredo 75), Aguero (Jesus Navas 46), Dzeko.
Plzen: Kozacik - Rajtoral, Cisovsky, Prochazka, Hubnik, Petrzela (Kovarik 73), Horava, Horvath, Duris (Wagner 90+1), Kolar (Bakos 86), Tecl.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern (Q)	5	5	0	0	15	2	15
Man City (Q)	5	4	0	1	15	8	12
CSKA	5	1	0	4	7	15	3
Plzen	5	0	0	5	4	16	0

Group E

Nov 26

Basle (Swi) 1 (Salah 87)
Chelsea (Eng) 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 35,208. **Ref:** Lannoy (Fra)
Basle: Sommer - Voser, Schar, Ivanov, Xhaka (Ajeti 71), Die, Salah, El Nenny, Frei, Stocker (Sauro 90+2), Streller (Sio 78).
Chelsea: Cech - Ivanovic, Cahill, Terry, Azpilicueta, Ramires, Mikel, Lampard, Oscar (Hazard 55), Eto'o (Fernando Torres 42), Willian (De Bruyne 86).

Nov 26

Steaua Bucharest (Rom) 0
Schalke (Ger) 0
Att: 50,633. **Ref:** Nijhuis (Hol)
Steaua: Tatarusanu - Prepelita (Stanciu 82), Szukala, Gardos, Latovlevici, Neagu (Fernando Varela 46), Bourceanu, Popa, Chipciu (Iancu 77), Tanase, Piovaccari.
Schalke: Fahrmann - Uchida, Howedes, Felipe Santana, Aogo, Neustadter, Jones, Farfan, Meyer (Draxler 73), Fuchs (Obasi 88), Szalai.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea (Q)	5	3	0	2	11	3	9
Basle	5	2	2	1	5	4	8
Schalke	5	2	1	2	4	6	7
Steaua	5	0	3	2	2	9	3

Group F

Nov 26

Arsenal (Eng) 2 (Wilshere 1, 65)
Marseille (Fra) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 59,912. **Ref:** Mateu Lahoz (Spa)
Arsenal: Szczesny - Sagna, Mertesacker, Koscielny, Monreal, Flamini, Ramsey, Wilshere (Walcott 75), Ozil (Arteta 81), Rosicky (Cazorla 75), Giroud.
Marseille: Mandanda - Abdallah, N'Koulou, Lucas Mendes, Morel, Lemina (Cheyrou 81), Romao, J Ayew (Valbuena 58), Imbula (Thauvin 58), Khelifa, Gignac.

Nov 26

Borussia Dortmund (Ger) 3 (Reus pen 10, Blaszczykowski 60, Aubameyang 78)
Napoli (Ita) 1 (Insigne 71)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 65,829. **Ref:** Velasco Carballo (Spa)
Dortmund: Weidenfeller - Grosskreutz, Papastathopoulos, Bender, Durm, Kehl, Sahin, Blaszczykowski (Aubameyang 69), Mkhitaryan, Reus (Piszczek 81), Lewandowski (Schieber 89).
Napoli: Reina - Maggio, Fernandez, Albiol, Armero, Dzemaili (Inler 62), Behrami, Callejon (Insigne 66), Mertens, Pandev (Zapata 76), Higuain.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	5	4	0	1	8	3	12
Dortmund	5	3	0	2	9	5	9
Napoli	5	3	0	2	8	9	9
Marseille	5	0	0	5	4	12	0

Group G

Nov 26

Porto (Por) 1 (Martinez 48)
Austria Vienna (Aut) 1 (Kienast 11)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 24,809. **Ref:** Hategan (Rom)
Porto: Helton - Danilo, Maicon, Mangala, Alex Sandro, Defour (Varela 46), Fernando, Gonzalez, Josue (Quintero 72), Martinez, Lica (Ricardo 65).
Austria: Lindner - Koch, Rogulj, Ortlechner, Suttner (Okotie 82), Holland, Dilaver (Mader 70), Royer, Kienast, Murg (Leovac 64), Hosiner.

Nov 26

Zenit St Petersburg (Rus) 1 (Alderweireld og 74)
Atletico Madrid (Spa) 1 (Adrian 53)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 17,885. **Ref:** Atkinson (Eng)
Zenit: Lodygin - Smolnikov, Hubocan, Lombaerts, Criscito, Witsel, Fayzulin (Bystrov 64), Shatov, Shirokov (Arshavin 64), Hulk, Kerzhakov.
Atletico: Courtois - Juanfran, Alderweireld, Miranda, Insua, Rodriguez (Oliver 80), Guilavogui, Gabi, Koke, Raul Garcia, Adrian.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Atletico (Q)	5	4	1	0	13	3	13
Zenit	5	1	3	1	4	5	6
Porto	5	1	2	2	4	5	5
Austria	5	0	2	3	1	9	2

Group H

Nov 26

Ajax (Hol) 2 (Serero 19, Hoesen 42)
Barcelona (Spa) 1 (Xavi pen 49)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 51,775. **Ref:** Kralovec (CzR)
Ajax: Cillessen - Van Rhijn, Veltman, Moisander, Boilesen (Poulsen 34), Klaassen, Blind, Serero, Schone (Denswil 51), Hoesen (Duarte 84), Fischer. *Sent off: Veltman 48min.*
Barcelona: Pinto - Puyol (Patric 68), Mascherano, Pique, Montoya, Song, Xavi (Sergi Roberto 74), Iniesta, Pedro, Fabregas (Traore 82), Neymar.

Nov 26

Celtic (Sco) 0
Milan (Ita) 3 (Kaka 13, Zapata 49, Balotelli 60)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 58,619. **Ref:** Cakir (Tur)
Celtic: Forster - Lustig, Ambrose, Van Dijk, Izaguirre, Boerrigter, Mulgrew, Kayal (Ledley 31), Forrest (Rogic 80), Commons (Stokes 65), Samaras.
Milan: Abbiati - Abate (Nocerino 48), Zapata, Bonera, Emanuelson, Montolivo, De Jong, Poli, Birsa (Constant 72), Kaka (Robinho 80), Balotelli.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – GROUP H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona (Q)	5	3	1	1	10	4	10
Milan	5	2	2	1	8	5	8
Ajax	5	2	1	2	5	8	7
Celtic	5	1	0	4	2	8	3

Top 2 in each group qualify for 1st knockout round; 3rd-placed teams enter Europa League at 1st knockout round stage

EUROPA LEAGUE

Group A

Nov 28: Kuban Krasnodar (Rus) 4 St Gallen (Swi) 0; Swansea City (Wal) 0 Valencia (Spa) 1.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Valencia (Q)	5	4	0	1	11	6	12
Swansea	5	2	2	1	6	3	8
Kuban	5	1	2	2	6	6	5
St Gallen	5	1	0	4	5	13	3

FRANCE

Ton up for Ibra

Zlatan Ibrahimovic became the 18th player to make 100 appearances in the Champions League as Paris Saint-Germain beat Olympiakos 2-1. During the game he scored his 39th goal in the competition proper, which puts him 10th on the all-time list.

Meanwhile, PSG have agreed a deal to remain at the Parc des Princes for another 30 years.

GERMANY

Bayern march on

Bayern Munich's 3-1 win away to CSKA Moscow set a Champions League record of 10 consecutive victories.

Eintracht Frankfurt's 1-0 win at Bordeaux was watched by 12,000 of their fans – a record away following for a game in the competition's group stage.

ITALY

Buffon's landmark

Juventus goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon made his 500th Serie A appearance as his side won 2-0 at Livorno to go top of the table for the first time this season.

Five hundred...Buffon

LATVIA

Double for Ventspils

Ventspils clinched their fifth Latvian league title with a 1-0 win over Daugava Riga on the last day of the season to wrap up their third domestic double.

With Skonto trailing Jurgis Pucinsks' side by two points going into the final game of the season, Federico Martinez made

Group B

Nov 28: Chornomorets (Ukr) 2 Dinamo Zagreb (Cro) 1; Ludogorets (Bul) 2 PSV Eindhoven (Hol) 0.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP B	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ludogorets (Q)	5	4	1	0	9	1	13
PSV	5	2	1	2	4	4	7
Chornomorets	5	2	1	2	5	6	7
Dinamo Zag'b	5	0	1	4	2	9	1

Group C

Nov 28: Elfsborg (Swe) 0 Salzburg (Aut) 1; Esbjerg (Den) 2 Standard Liege (Blg) 1.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP C	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Salzburg (Q)	5	5	0	0	12	3	15
Esbjerg (Q)	5	4	0	1	8	5	12
Standard	5	0	1	4	5	10	1
Elfsborg	5	0	1	4	2	9	1

Group D

Nov 28: Rubin Kazan (Rus) 1 Maribor (Sln) 1; Wigan Athletic (Eng) 1 Zulte Waregem (Blg) 2.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP D	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rubin (Q)	5	3	2	0	12	4	11
Z Waregem	5	2	1	2	4	8	7
Wigan	5	1	2	2	5	5	5
Maribor	5	1	1	3	7	11	4

Group E

Nov 28: Dnipro (Ukr) 4 Pandurii (Rom) 1; Pacos de Ferreira (Por) 0 Fiorentina (Ita) 0.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP E	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fiorentina (Q)	5	4	1	0	10	2	13
Dnipro (Q)	5	4	0	1	10	3	12
Pacos Ferreira	5	0	2	3	1	8	2
Pandurii	5	0	1	4	3	11	1

Group F

Nov 28: APOEL (Cyp) 0 Maccabi Tel Aviv (Isr) 0; Bordeaux (Fra) 0 Eintracht Frankfurt (Ger) 1.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP F	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Eintracht (Q)	5	4	0	1	11	4	12
M Tel Aviv	5	2	2	1	6	5	8
APOEL	5	1	2	2	3	6	5
Bordeaux	5	1	0	4	4	9	3

Group G

Nov 28: Genk (Blg) 3 Dynamo Kiev (Ukr) 1; Rapid Vienna (Aut) 2 Thun (Swi) 1.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP G	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Genk (Q)	5	3	2	0	9	5	11
Dynamo Kiev	5	2	1	2	8	6	7
Rapid	5	1	3	1	7	7	6
Thun	5	1	0	4	3	9	3

Group H

Nov 28: Sevilla (Spa) 1 Estoril (Por) 1; Slovan Liberec (CzR) 1 Freiburg (Ger) 2.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP H	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sevilla (Q)	5	2	3	0	7	4	9
Freiburg	5	1	3	1	5	6	6
Liberec	5	1	3	1	7	7	6
Estoril	5	0	3	2	4	6	3

Group I

Nov 28: Lyon (Fra) 1 Betis (Spa) 0; Rijeka (Cro) 0 Vitoria Guimaraes (Por) 0.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP I	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lyon (Q)	5	2	3	0	4	2	9
Betis (Q)	5	2	2	1	3	2	8
Guimaraes	5	1	2	2	5	3	5
Rijeka	5	0	3	2	2	7	3

Group J

Nov 28: Legia Warsaw (Pol) 0 Lazio (Ita) 2; Trabzonspor (Tur) 4 Apollon (Cyp) 2.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP J	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Trabzonspor (Q)	5	4	1	0	13	6	13
Lazio (Q)	5	3	2	0	8	4	11
Apollon	5	1	1	3	5	8	4
Legia	5	0	0	5	0	8	0

Group K

Nov 28: Anzhi Makhachkala (Rus) 1 Sheriff (Mol) 1; Tromso (Nor) 0 Tottenham Hotspur (Eng) 2.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP K	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tottenham (Q)	5	5	0	0	11	1	15
Anzhi (Q)	5	2	2	1	3	3	8
Sheriff	5	0	3	2	3	6	3
Tromso	5	0	1	4	1	8	1

Group L

Nov 28: AZ Alkmaar (Hol) 2 Maccabi Haifa (Isr) 0; Shakhter Karagandy (Kaz) 0 PAOK Salonika (Gre) 2.

EUROPA LEAGUE – GROUP L	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PAOK (Q)	5	3	2	0	8	4	11
AZ (Q)	5	3	2	0	6	2	11
M Haifa	5	0	2	3	4	8	2
Shakhter	5	0	2	3	4	8	2

Top 2 in each group qualify for 1st knockout round, along with the 8 3rd-placed teams from the Champions League group stage

AUSTRIA

Nov 9: Wacker 4 Wiener Neustadt 0; Austria 1 Wolfsberger 0.
Nov 10: Grodig 2 Rapid 2; Admira 3 Salzburg 1.
Nov 23: Wiener Neustadt 0 Grodig 2; Wacker 0 Austria 5; Ried 2 Admira 2.
Nov 24: Rapid 2 Salzburg 1.
Nov 27: Sturm 2 Ried 0.
Nov 30: Grodig 1 Austria 0; Admira 3 Wolfsberger 0; Sturm 2 Wiener Neustadt 3.
Dec 1: Salzburg 4 Ried 0; Rapid 3 Wacker 0.

AUSTRIA	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Salzburg	17	11	4	2	51	15	37
Rapid	17	8	6	3	33	19	30
Grodig	17	8	4	5	36	30	28
Austria	17	7	4	6	31	20	25
Ried	17	6	7	4	30	29	25
Sturm	16	5	4	7	22	25	19
W Neustadt	17	4	5	8	23	46	17
Wolfsberger	16	3	6	7	23	31	15
Wacker	17	2	7	8	21	41	13
Admira[1]	17	5	3	9	23	37	10

36-round season (9x4); bottom team will be relegated

[1]8pts deducted for breaching licensing regulations

BELARUS

Division split after 22-round regular season; teams carried forward full regular-season record

BELARUS – CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
BATE (C)	32	21	4	7	61	25	67
Shakhtyor	32	17	7	8	44	26	58
Dinamo Minsk	32	15	9	8	44	33	54
Neman	32	13	8	11	34	30	47
Torpedo	32	12	6	14	33	38	42
Gomel	32	11	7	14	34	40	40

BELARUS – RELEGATION GROUP – FINAL	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Belshina[1]	32	15	8	9	42	38	47
Dinamo Brest	32	11	7	14	32	41	40
Minsk	32	10	8	14	36	40	38
Naftan	32	9	10	13	29	41	37
Dnepr[2]	32	9	6	17	28	42	33
Slavia (R)	32	5	8	19	24	47	23

[1]6pts deducted
[2]Dnepr enter rel/prom play-off

BELGIUM

Regular season

Nov 8: Lokeren 4 Mechelen 0.
Nov 9: Cercle Brugge 3 Kortrijk 1; OH Leuven 2 Lierse 0; Charleroi 0 Gent 1; Oostende 2 Mons 0.
Nov 10: Standard 0 Club Brugge 0; Genk 0 Anderlecht 1; Zulte Waregem 2 Waasland-Beveren 0.
Nov 23: Charleroi 2 Anderlecht 1; Gent 2 Waasland-Beveren 0; Oostende 4 Genk 0; Zulte Waregem 3 Mechelen 1; OH Leuven 1 Kortrijk 1; Cercle Brugge 2 Lierse 4.
Nov 24: Lokeren 0 Club Brugge 3; Standard 1 Mons 0.
Nov 30: Club Brugge 2 Oostende 0; Mechelen 0 Gent 1; Mons 1 Lokeren 0; Waasland-Beveren 0 Charleroi 0.
Dec 1: Lierse 0 Standard 5; Anderlecht 2 Cercle Brugge 1; Genk 3 OH Leuven 0; Kortrijk 1 Zulte Waregem 1.

BELGIUM – REGULAR	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Standard	17	12	4	1	35	9	40
Club Brugge	17	11	3	3	27	14	36
Z Waregem	17	10	6	1	35	23	36
Genk	17	11	2	4	31	17	35
Anderlecht	17	11	1	5	41	20	34
Kortrijk	17	8	3	6	23	19	27
Lokeren	17	8	2	7	29	24	26
Gent	17	6	6	5	20	22	24
Cercle Brugge	17	5	5	7	18	28	20
Charleroi	17	4	7	6	19	23	19
Lierse	17	5	2	10	15	32	17
Mechelen	17	4	4	9	21	31	16
Oostende	17	4	3	10	15	27	15
OH Leuven	17	3	6	8	20	30	15
Waasland-B	17	1	7	9	11	24	10
Mons	17	1	3	13	12	29	6

30-round regular season (15x2); top 6 will form championship group, 7th to 14th will enter Europa League-place play-offs, 15th & 16th (bottom 2) will meet in the relegation play-off series (the loser going down automatically, the winner entering rel/prom play-offs)

CZECH REPUBLIC

Nov 8: Jihlava 0 Ostrava 0; Dukla 1 Bohemians 1905 1.
Nov 9: Znojmo 1 Slovacko 2; Mlada Boleslav 1 Plzen 2.
Nov 10: Jablonec 6 Pribram 0; Slavia 0 Brno 0; Olomouc 1 Sparta 1.
Nov 11: Teplice 1 Liberec 1.
Nov 22: Brno 1 Plzen 3.
Nov 23: Pribram 5 Jihlava 0; Liberec 0 Dukla 1; Sparta 4 Mlada Boleslav 1.
Nov 24: Bohemians 1905 0 Jablonec 1; Znojmo 2 Olomouc 1; Slovacko 3 Slavia 0.
Nov 25: Ostrava 0 Teplice 0.
Nov 29: Jihlava 2 Slovacko 1; Teplice 1 Znojmo 3.
Nov 30: Olomouc 1 Dukla 2; Jablonec 2 Sparta 3.
Dec 1: Mlada Boleslav 4 Ostrava 0; Bohemians 1905 1 Brno 1; Plzen 2 Pribram 0.
Dec 2: Slavia 2 Liberec 1.

CZECH REPUBLIC	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sparta	16	13	3	0	41	11	42
Plzen	16	11	4	1	37	12	37
Teplice	16	8	4	4	35	19	28
Dukla	16	7	6	3	19	13	27
M Boleslav	16	7	5	4	32	19	26
Liberec	16	7	4	5	16	19	25
Jablonec	16	6	4	6	30	28	22
Slovacko	16	5	4	7	25	27	19
Olomouc	16	4	5	7	26	30	17
Znojmo	16	4	5	7	18	23	17
Slavia	16	4	4	8	12	28	16
Brno	16	4	3	9	19	26	15
Jihlava	16	4	3	9	21	31	15
Pribram	16	4	3	9	18	33	15
Ostrava	16	3	6	7	14	31	15
Boh'ians 1905	16	3	5	8	14	27	14

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated

DENMARK

Nov 8: Viborg 2 Midtjylland 3.
Nov 9: Nordsjaelland 3 SonderjyskE 0.
Nov 10: OB 1 Vestsjaelland 3; Esbjerg 1 Copenhagen 1; Brondby 3 AGF 0.
Nov 11: Randers 1 AaB 4.
Nov 22: SonderjyskE 1 Esbjerg 0.
Nov 23: Randers 1 OB 1.
Nov 24: AGF 2 Vestsjaelland 2; Copenhagen 4 Viborg 1; Midtjylland 0 Brondby 1.
Nov 25: AaB 1 Nordsjaelland 1.
Nov 29: Vestsjaelland 0 Midtjylland 1.
Nov 30: Viborg 2 SonderjyskE 2.
Dec 1: Nordsjaelland 1 Randers 1; OB 4 AGF 1; Brondby 1 Copenhagen 3.
Dec 2: Esbjerg 2 AaB 2.

DENMARK	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Midtjylland	17	9	6	2	29	16	33
AaB	17	8	5	4	27	20	29
Copenhagen	17	7	6	4	33	21	27
Brondby	17	6	6	5	22	21	24
OB	17	5	7	5	28	24	22
AGF	17	6	4	7	25	30	22
Viborg	17	5	6	6	28	29	21
Vestsjaelland	17	5	6	6	20	25	21
Randers	17	4	8	5	23	27	20
Nordsjaelland	17	5	5	7	18	25	20
Esbjerg	17	5	4	8	29	27	19
SonderjyskE	17	4	3	10	16	33	15

33-round season (11x3); bottom 2 will be relegated

certain of things with his goal late in the first half. In the end, however, the victory had not even been needed as Skonto lost 2-0 to Jelgava – which was the eventual runner-up's only league defeat of the season. Ventspils won the Latvian Cup in May, beating Liepajas Metalurgs in the Final.

Daugava Daugavpils were promoted and will replace Ilukstes next season.

LITHUANIA

Back from the brink

Five years after the club went bankrupt, Zalgiris won the domestic treble and ended Ekranas' five-year domination of the league championship.

Resurrected by a fans' consortium, the club from Vilnius were runners-up in 2011 and 2012 before winning their first league title in 14 years. Marek Zub's side had retained the Lithuanian Cup in May, adding it to the Super Cup they won in March. They also became the first Lithuanian side to negotiate three rounds of a UEFA competition before losing to Salzburg in the Europa League play-offs.

Tauras were relegated from the top flight and will be replaced by Klaipedos Granitas next season.

35 appearances in the Europa League, which is the new record set by PSV's Ola Toivonen

Record-breaker...Toivonen (right)

ENGLAND

Saturday, November 9

Aston Villa 2 (Bacuna 76, Kozak 84)
Cardiff 0 Att: 35,809

Chelsea 2 (Eto'o 45, Hazard pen 90+6)
West Bromwich 2 (Long 60, Sessegnon 68)
Att: 41,623

Crystal Palace 0
Everton 0 Att: 25,231

Liverpool 4 (Amorebieta og 23, Skrtel 26, Suarez 36, 54)
Fulham 0 Att: 44,768

Norwich 3 (Hooper pen 54, Snodgrass 72, Fer 90+3)
West Ham 1 (Morrison 32) Att: 26,824

Southampton 4 (Schneiderlin 16, Lambert pen 30, Lallana 37, S Davis 88)
Hull 1 (Sagbo 55) Att: 30,022

Sunday, November 10

Manchester United 1 (Van Persie 27)
Arsenal 0 Att: 75,138

Sunderland 1 (Bardsley 21)
Manchester City 0 Att: 40,137

Swansea 3 (Bony 56, 86, Dyer 74)
Stoke 3 (Walters 8, Ireland 25, Adam pen 90+6)
Att: 19,242

Tottenham 0
Newcastle 1 (Remy 13) Att: 36,042

Saturday, November 23

Arsenal 2 (Giroud 22, pen 86)
Southampton 0 Att: 60,007

Everton 3 (Mirallas 8, Lukaku 72, 82)
Liverpool 3 (Coutinho 5, Suarez 19, Sturridge 89)
Att: 39,576

Fulham 1 (Parker 64)
Swansea 2 (Hughes og 56, Shelvey 80)
Att: 25,258

Hull 0
Crystal Palace 1 (Bannan 81) Att: 23,043

Newcastle 2 (Remy 2, Gouffran 38)
Norwich 1 (Fer 80) Att: 51,328

Stoke 2 (Adam 30, N'Zonzi 81)
Sunderland 0 Att: 26,007

West Ham 0
Chelsea 3 (Lampard pen 21, 82, Oscar 34)
Att: 34,977

Sunday, November 24

Cardiff 2 (Campbell 33, Kim 90+1)
Manchester United 2 (Rooney 15, Evra 45)
Att: 28,016

Manchester City 6 (Jesus Navas 1, 90+2, Sandro og 34, Aguero 41, 50, Negredo 55)
Tottenham 0 Att: 47,228

Monday, November 25

West Bromwich 2 (Long 3, 11)
Aston Villa 2 (El Ahmadi 67, Westwood 76)
Att: 24,902

Saturday, November 30

Aston Villa 0
Sunderland 0 Att: 33,036

Cardiff 0
Arsenal 3 (Ramsey 29, 90+2, Flamini 86)
Att: 27,948

Everton 4 (Deulofeu 45, Coleman 49, Oviedo 58, Lukaku 79)
Stoke 0 Att: 35,513

Newcastle 2 (Gouffran 36, Sissoko 57)
West Bromwich 1 (Brunt 53) Att: 49,298

Norwich 1 (Hooper 30)
Crystal Palace 0 Att: 26,851

West Ham 3 (Diame 47, C Cole 82, J Cole 88)
Fulham 0 Att: 34,946

Sunday, December 1

Chelsea 3 (Cahill 55, Terry 62, Ba 90)
Southampton 1 (Rodriguez 1) Att: 41,568

Hull 3 (Livermore 20, Meyler 72, Skrtel og 87)
Liverpool 1 (Gerrard 27) Att: 24,940

Manchester City 3 (Negredo 8, Nasri 58, 77)
Swansea 0 Att: 46,559

Tottenham 2 (Walker 18, Sandro 54)
Manchester United 2 (Rooney 32, pen 57)
Att: 35,884

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	13	10	1	2	27	10	31
Chelsea	13	8	3	2	24	11	27
Man City	13	8	1	4	37	12	25
Liverpool	13	7	3	3	25	16	24
Everton	13	6	6	1	21	13	24
Newcastle	13	7	2	4	19	18	23
Southampton	13	6	4	3	16	10	22
Man United	13	6	4	3	22	17	22
Tottenham	13	6	3	4	11	14	21
Hull	13	5	2	6	12	16	17
Aston Villa	13	4	4	5	13	14	16
West Brom	13	3	6	4	15	16	15
Swansea	13	4	3	6	17	19	15
Norwich	13	4	2	7	11	23	14
West Ham	13	3	4	6	12	14	13
Stoke	13	3	4	6	12	18	13
Cardiff	13	3	4	6	11	20	13
Fulham	13	3	1	9	11	24	10
Sunderland	13	2	2	9	8	24	8
Crystal Palace	13	2	1	10	7	22	7

38-round season (19x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

Leading goalscorers

10 Sergio Aguero (Manchester City)
9 Daniel Sturridge (Liverpool)
9 Luis Suarez (Liverpool)
8 Romelu Lukaku (Everton)
8 Aaron Ramsey (Arsenal)
8 Loic Remy (Newcastle)
8 Wayne Rooney (Manchester United)

ESTONIA

ESTONIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Levadia (C)	36	30	1	5	69	24	91
Kalju	36	26	6	4	78	23	84
Sillamae	36	23	6	7	75	22	75
Flora	36	21	5	10	83	40	68
Paide	36	15	2	19	43	58	47
Infonet	36	10	8	18	36	56	38
Trans	36	11	3	22	39	55	36
Tallinna Kalev	36	10	4	22	35	77	34
Tammeka[1]	36	8	8	20	30	68	32
Kuressaare (R)	36	2	5	29	22	87	11

[1]Tammeka stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off

FRANCE

Friday, November 8

Monaco 1 (Falcao 27)
Evian TG 1 (Wass 20) Att: 6,507

Saturday, November 9

Bastia 1 (Bruno 8)
Rennes 0 Att: 13,589

Guingamp 0
Lille 0 Att: 13,261

Lorient 0
Reims 0 Att: 12,753

Paris Saint-Germain 3 (Ibrahimovic 39, pen 57, 75)
Nice 1 (Pejcinovic 70) Att: 45,599

Toulouse 1 (Sylla 42)
AC Ajaccio 1 (Lasne 7) Att: 20,559

Valenciennes 1 (Angoua 6)
Montpellier 1 (Stambouli 90+1) Att: 12,521

Sunday, November 10

Bordeaux 0
Nantes 3 (Bessat 41, Djilobodji 61, Djordjevic 64)
Att: 24,160

Marseille 2 (Thauvin 5, Gignac pen 83)
Sochaux 1 (Mayuka 60) Att: 37,587

Saint-Etienne 1 (Hamouma 65)
Lyon 2 (Lacazette 48, Briand 90) Att: 37,768

Friday, November 22

AC Ajaccio 1 (Perozo 31)
Marseille 3 (Payet 27, Gignac 39, Thauvin 59)
Att: 6,846

Saturday, November 23

Evian TG 0
Lorient 4 (Aboubakar 7, 13, Diallo 83, Jouffre pen 87) Att: 8,282

Lyon 1 (Gomis 17)
Valenciennes 1 (Bahebeck 66) Att: 33,202

Montpellier 1 (Cabella 69)
Guingamp 1 (Giresse pen 77) Att: 14,827

Reims 0
Paris Saint-Germain 3 (Lucas Moura 25, Menez 60, Ibrahimovic 90) Att: 20,666

Rennes 1 (Kana-Biyik 63)
Bordeaux 1 (Diabate 64) Att: 15,465

Sochaux 1 (Mayuka 74)
Bastia 1 (Boudebouz 31) Att: 14,551

Sunday, November 24

Lille 1 (Souare 84)
Toulouse 0 Att: 38,433

Nantes 0
Monaco 1 (Obbadi 70) Att: 32,195

Nice 0
Saint-Etienne 1 (Erdinc 23) Att: 27,360

Friday, November 29

Marseille 2 (Thauvin 36, Khelifa 90+3)
Montpellier 0 Att: 35,045

Saturday, November 30

Guingamp 1 (Sankhare 63)
Nantes 0 Att: 15,658

Lorient 3 (Monnet-Paquet 17, Amavi og 71, Aboubakar 90+4)
Nice 0 Att: 13,633

Monaco 2 (Rodriguez 19, Martial 44)
Rennes 0 Att: 6,227

Saint-Etienne 4 (Sall 62, Perrin 76, 78, Erdinc 87)
Reims 0 Att: 24,109

Toulouse 5 (Ben Yedder 28, 45, pen 62, Sirieix 47, Zouma og 90+3)
Sochaux 1 (Mayuka 7) Att: 13,001

Valenciennes 0
Lille 1 (Rodelin 47) Att: 14,874

Sunday, December 1

Bastia 2 (Krasic 49, Khazri 90+5)
Evian TG 0 Att: 12,941

Bordeaux 4 (Jussie 8, 68, Sertic 50, Maurice-Belay 55)
AC Ajaccio 0 Att: 11,399

Paris Saint-Germain 4 (Cavani 36, Ibrahimovic pen 41, pen 83, Thiago Silva 60)
Lyon 0 Att: 44,829

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PSG	15	11	4	0	34	8	37
Lille	15	10	3	2	17	4	33
Monaco	15	9	5	1	24	11	32
Marseille	15	8	3	4	23	14	27
Saint-Etienne	15	7	3	5	23	17	24
Nantes	15	7	2	6	19	12	23
Guingamp	15	6	4	5	18	15	22
Bastia	15	6	4	5	18	20	22
Bordeaux	15	5	6	4	21	18	21
Lyon	15	5	4	6	20	21	19
Reims	15	4	7	4	15	19	19
Toulouse	15	5	4	6	16	21	19
Rennes	15	4	6	5	17	16	18
Lorient	15	5	2	8	18	23	17
Nice	15	5	2	8	14	20	17
Evian TG	15	4	4	7	15	27	16
Montpellier	15	2	9	4	17	20	15
Valenciennes	15	2	4	9	12	22	10
AC Ajaccio	15	1	5	9	10	26	8
Sochaux	15	1	5	9	13	30	8

38-round season (19x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

Leading goalscorers

11 Zlatan Ibrahimovic (Paris Saint-Germain)
10 Edinson Cavani (Paris Saint-Germain)
9 Radamel Falcao (Monaco)
8 Vincent Aboubakar (Lorient)
8 Filip Djordjevic (Nantes)

KAZAKHSTAN

Shakhter cup success

Shakhter Karagandy, who this term became the first club from Kazakhstan to compete in the group stage of a UEFA competition, made up for the failure to defend their league title by winning the Kazakh Cup for the first time. They beat Taraz 1-0 in the Final with a Sergei Khizhnichenko goal.

Winner...Khizhnichenko

MACEDONIA

Late call-up for coach

At the age of 43, keeper Sasa Ilic played his first game since 2007 when Gorno Lisice's first-choice Marjan Madzarovski was injured before the league clash with Renova. Now on the club's coaching staff, Ilic kept a clean sheet as his side managed a goalless draw.

POLAND

Non-EU player limit

As of the 2015-16 season, teams in the Polish top flight will be limited to having a maximum of three players from outside the European Union in their match-day squads.

The limit will be further decreased to two non-EU players for the following Esktraklasa season.

Beaten...Barca (top) at Ajax

GERMANY

Friday, November 8
Hanover 0
Eintracht Braunschweig 0 Att: 47,200

Saturday, November 9
Bayer Leverkusen 5 (Son 9, 16, 55, Kiessling 72, Castro 89)
Hamburg 3 (Beister 23, Lasogga 49, 74)
Att: 30,077

Bayern Munich 3 (Boateng 4, Ribery 42, Muller pen 90+5)
Augsburg 0 Att: 71,000

Hoffenheim 2 (Salihovic pen 70, 81)
Hertha Berlin 3 (Ben Hatira 13, Ramos pen 53, 84)
Att: 25,078

Monchengladbach 3 (Arango 72, Stark og 75, Herrmann 87)
Nuremberg 1 (Drmic 21) Att: 53,235

Schalke 3 (Boateng 64, 85, Farfan 90+1)
Werder Bremen 1 (Kroos 22) Att: 61,973

Wolfsburg 2 (Rodriguez 56, Olic 69)
Borussia Dortmund 1 (Reus 45+2) Att: 30,000

Sunday, November 10
Freiburg 1 (Hanke 78)
Stuttgart 3 (Ibisevic 9, Werner 10, 82) Att: 23,700

Mainz 1 (Choupo-Moting 88)
Eintracht Frankfurt 0 Att: 34,000

Friday, November 22
Stuttgart 0
Monchengladbach 2 (Raffael 37, Wendt 73)
Att: 49,560

Saturday, November 23
Augsburg 2 (Altintop 17, 23)
Hoffenheim 0 Att: 27,855

Borussia Dortmund 0
Bayern Munich 3 (Gotze 66, Robben 85, Muller 87) Att: 80,645

Eintracht Braunschweig 0
Freiburg 1 (Fernandes 52) Att: 21,810

Eintracht Frankfurt 3 (Flum 56, Joselu 61, 68)
Schalke 3 (Flum og 14, Matip 18, Howedes 86)
Att: 51,500

Hertha Berlin 0
Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Kiessling 29) Att: 47,419

Nuremberg 1 (Ginczek 72)
Wolfsburg 1 (Arnold 39) Att: 35,678

Sunday, November 24
Hamburg 3 (Badelj 31, Beister 46, Calhanoglu 84)
Hanover 1 (Huszti 28) Att: 52,091

Werder Bremen 2 (Elia 85, Di Santo 90)
Mainz 3 (N Muller 7, Okazaki 17, 70) Att: 38,429

Friday, November 29
Wolfsburg 1 (Rodriguez pen 31)
Hamburg 1 (Calhanoglu 19) Att: 28,648

Saturday, November 30
Bayer Leverkusen 3 (Son 36, 76, Kiessling 47)
Nuremberg 0 Att: 27,395

Bayern Munich 2 (Robben 2, 30)
Eintracht Braunschweig 0 Att: 71,000

Hertha Berlin 0
Augsburg 0 Att: 38,667

Hoffenheim 4 (Salihovic pen 12, pen 18, Volland 49, Herdling 53)
Werder Bremen 4 (Hunt pen 45, Elia 45+1, Petersen 59, Bargfrede 90+1) Att: 25,608

Mainz 1 (Choupo-Moting pen 74)
Borussia Dortmund 3 (Aubameyang 70, Lewandowski pen 79, pen 90+4) Att: 34,000

Schalke 3 (Farfan 34, pen 47, Jones 79)
Stuttgart 0 Att: 61,973

Sunday, December 1
Hanover 2 (Diouf 25, Huszti 68)
Eintracht Frankfurt 0 Att: 40,700

Monchengladbach 1 (Raffael 63)
Freiburg 0 Att: 50,084

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern	14	12	2	0	32	7	38
Leverkusen	14	11	1	2	31	14	34
Dortmund	14	10	1	3	35	15	31
M'gladbach	14	9	1	4	31	16	28
Schalke	14	7	3	4	29	26	24
Wolfsburg	14	7	2	5	20	16	23
Hertha	14	5	4	5	20	17	19
Mainz	14	6	1	7	21	28	19
Hanover	14	5	2	7	17	22	17
Augsburg	14	5	2	7	15	23	17
Hamburg	14	4	4	6	30	31	16
Stuttgart	14	4	4	6	24	26	16
Werder	14	4	4	6	19	27	16
Hoffenheim	14	3	5	6	32	34	14
Frankfurt	14	2	5	7	17	26	11
Freiburg	14	2	5	7	14	25	11
Nuremberg	14	0	8	6	13	29	8
Braunschweig	14	2	2	10	8	26	8

34-round season (17x2); bottom 2 will be relegated, 3rd bottom will enter rel/prom play-off

Leading goalscorers

11 Robert Lewandowski (Borussia Dortmund)
9 Stefan Kiessling (Bayer Leverkusen)
8 Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang (Dortmund)
8 Vedad Ibisevic (Stuttgart)
8 Pierre-Michel Lasogga (Hamburg)
8 Mario Mandzukic (Bayern Munich)

GREECE

Nov 9: Platanias 2 Apollon 0; Giannina 2 OFI 1; Aris 0 Panathinaikos 2.
Nov 10: Panionios 2 Atromitos 1; Veria 0 Kalloni 3; Panetolikos 2 Levadiakos 1; Ergotelis 3 Panthrakikos 1; Olympiakos 4 PAOK 0.
Nov 11: Asteras 2 Xanthi 2.
Nov 23: Apollon 0 OFI 1; Atromitos 1 Veria 0; Panthrakikos 1 Olympiakos 4.
Nov 24: Panathinaikos 3 Giannina 1; Ergotelis 0 Asteras 1; Xanthi 3 Panetolikos 1; Kalloni 1 Platanias 0; PAOK 3 Aris 1.
Nov 25: Levadiakos 2 Panionios 0.
Nov 30: Asteras 3 Panetolikos 0; Platanias 1 Atromitos 1; Apollon 1 Panathinaikos 1.
Dec 1: Aris 2 Panthrakikos 2; Panionios 0 Xanthi 0; Veria 4 Levadiakos 3; OFI 3 Kalloni 1; Olympiakos 3 Ergotelis 0.
Dec 2: Giannina 0 PAOK 2.

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Olympiakos	13	12	1	0	41	4	37
PAOK	13	10	1	2	25	12	31
Atromitos	13	6	4	3	19	11	22
Panathinaikos	13	6	3	4	17	13	21
Asteras	13	5	6	2	21	14	21
Xanthi	13	5	3	5	17	19	18
Kalloni	13	6	0	7	15	20	18
Panetolikos	13	4	5	4	14	13	17
Ergotelis	13	4	5	4	14	14	17
Giannina	13	5	2	6	14	17	17
Panionios	13	4	4	5	14	17	16
OFI	13	3	6	4	12	15	15
Panthrakikos	13	3	6	4	15	21	15
Levadiakos	13	4	2	7	15	25	14
Platanias	13	2	6	5	12	17	12
Veria	13	2	4	7	12	23	10
Apollon	13	2	3	8	12	22	9
Aris	13	2	3	8	9	21	9

34-round season (17x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

HOLLAND

Nov 8: Heerenveen 5 RKC 2.
Nov 9: Roda JC 1 Go Ahead Eagles 4; Vitesse 3 Utrecht 1; Heracles 0 Groningen 3; Den Haag 3 Cambuur 0.
Nov 10: Zwolle 1 Twente 1; NEC 0 Ajax 3; NAC 2 PSV 1; Feyenoord 2 AZ 2.
Nov 23: PSV 1 Heerenveen 1; Cambuur 2 NEC 1; AZ 2 Roda JC 2; Ajax 3 Heracles 0.
Nov 24: RKC 1 Feyenoord 0; Utrecht 3 Den Haag 0; Go Ahead Eagles 0 Vitesse 3; Groningen 0 Zwolle 0; Twente 5 NAC 2.
Nov 29: Roda JC 1 Twente 2.
Nov 30: Zwolle 1 RKC 1; Heerenveen 3 Go Ahead Eagles 1; NAC 2 Groningen 2; Heracles 1 Utrecht 2.
Dec 1: Den Haag 0 Ajax 4; Feyenoord 3 PSV 1; Vitesse 3 Cambuur 0; NEC 3 AZ 2.

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Vitesse	15	9	3	3	31	18	30
Ajax	15	8	4	3	33	15	28
Twente	15	7	6	2	35	15	27
Feyenoord	15	7	3	5	30	23	24
Groningen	15	6	6	3	30	27	24
AZ	15	7	3	5	27	24	24
Heerenveen	14	6	4	4	33	27	22
Zwolle	15	5	7	3	23	15	22
Utrecht	15	6	3	6	22	27	21
PSV	15	5	5	5	26	18	20
NAC	15	5	4	6	26	25	19
Roda JC	15	4	6	5	25	32	18
Go Ahead	14	4	4	6	21	35	16
Cambuur	15	4	3	8	13	21	15
Heracles	14	4	2	8	17	27	14
RKC	15	3	4	8	20	30	13
Den Haag	14	4	1	9	17	34	13
NEC	15	2	6	7	23	39	12

34-round season (17x2); bottom team will be relegated, 2nd & 3rd bottom will enter rel/prom play-offs

ITALY

Saturday, November 9
Catania 1 (Lopez pen 30)
Udinese 0 Att: 12,986

Internazionale 2 (Bardi og 30, Nagatomo 90+1)
Livorno 0 Att: 39,775

Sunday, November 10
Atalanta 2 (Brivio 74, Livaja 90+3)
Bologna 1 (Bianchi 76) Att: 12,511

Cagliari 2 (Conti 43, 88)
Torino 1 (Immobile 52) Att: 4,500

Chievo 0
Milan 0 Att: 10,000

Fiorentina 2 (Rossi pen 11, 17)
Sampdoria 1 (Gabbiadini 74) Att: 28,305

Genoa 2 (Portanova 29, Kucka 35)
Verona 0 Att: 19,715

Juventus 3 (Llorente 2, Pirlo 74, Pogba 80)
Napoli 0 Att: 36,969

Parma 1 (Lucarelli 64)
Lazio 1 (Keita 50) Att: 11,139

Roma 1 (Longhi og 19)
Sassuolo 1 (Berardi 90+4) Att: 46,052

Saturday, November 23
Milan 1 (Kaka 4)
Genoa 1 (Gilardino pen 9) Att: 34,848

Napoli 0
Parma 1 (Cassano 81) Att: 36,400

Verona 0
Chievo 1 (Lazarevic 90+2) Att: 24,200

Sunday, November 24
Bologna 1 (Kone 12)
Internazionale 1 (Jonathan 51) Att: 36,486

Livorno 0
Juventus 2 (Llorente 63, Tevez 75) Att: 18,735

Sampdoria 1 (Soriano 67)
Lazio 1 (Cana 90+4) Att: 20,352

Sassuolo 2 (Zaza 63, Berardi 67)
Atalanta 0 Att: 9,967

Torino 4 (Immobile 11, El Kaddouri 34, 61, Moretti 59)
Catania 1 (Leto 50) Att: 13,856

Udinese 1 (Heurtaux 34)
Fiorentina 0 Att: 14,318

Monday, November 25
Roma 0
Cagliari 0 Att: 38,823

Saturday, November 30
Genoa 1 (Biondini 69)
Torino 1 (El Kaddouri 7) Att: 19,262

Parma 1 (Cassano 23)
Bologna 1 (Kone 10) Att: 11,973

Sunday, December 1
Atalanta 1 (Brivio 51)
Roma 1 (Strootman 90) Att: 15,362

Cagliari 2 (Nene 72, Sau 87)
Sassuolo 2 (Marzorati 14, Zaza 19) Att: 4,800

Catania 1 (Castro 13)
Milan 3 (Montolivo 19, Balotelli 63, Kaka 81)
Att: 17,383

Chievo 3 (Rigoni 36, Thereau 56, Paloschi 79)
Livorno 0 Att: 6,000

Internazionale 1 (Guarin 17)
Sampdoria 1 (Renan 89) Att: 43,607

RUSSIA

Loko on top at last

Lokomotiv Moscow topped the table for the first time in seven years after a 3-1 win at Kuban Krasnodar.

SPAIN

Barca finally beaten

Barcelona's 2-1 loss to Ajax meant they failed to equal their best-ever unbeaten start to a season, set in 2011 when they went 21 games without defeat.

Real Madrid's 4-1 win against Galatasaray saw them beat Barca's record of scoring in 29 successive Champions League games.

Carlos Vela scored four goals in Real Sociedad's 4-3 win against Celta Vigo – the first player to score more than three this season in Europe's "big five" leagues

Cup winners...Flamengo

BRAZIL

Fla's third cup triumph

Late second-leg goals from Elias and Hernane at the Maracana Stadium gave Flamengo a 3-1 aggregate victory over Atletico Paranaense in the Brazilian Cup Final. It was the third time that Flamengo have won the competition and means they will now play in the 2014 Libertadores Cup.

MEXICO

Media group's new club

TV Azteca, who already own Monarcas Morelia, have now bought Atlas, seemingly in breach of the country's multi-ownership rules.

In May 2013, Liga MX had announced that: "During the next five years no owner can increase the amounts of teams they have today."

Juventus 1 (Llorente 90+1)
Udinese 0 Att: 32,279

Monday, December 2

Fiorentina 4 (Borja Valero 5, 14, Vargas 43, Rossi pen 54)
Verona 3 (Romulo 6, Iturbe 13, Jorginho 72)
Att: 33,976

Lazio 2 (Behrami og 25, Keita 88)
Napoli 4 (Higuain 24, 72, Pandev 50, Callejon 90+1) Att: 30,000

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus	14	12	1	1	29	10	37
Roma	14	10	4	0	27	4	34
Napoli	14	10	1	3	28	14	31
Inter	14	7	6	1	31	14	27
Fiorentina	14	8	3	3	28	18	27
Verona	14	7	1	6	25	24	22
Genoa	14	5	4	5	15	16	19
Milan	14	4	5	5	21	21	17
Lazio	14	4	5	5	19	21	17
Parma	14	4	5	5	19	21	17
Atalanta	14	5	2	7	15	18	17
Torino	14	3	7	4	23	23	16
Udinese	14	5	1	8	12	16	16
Cagliari	14	3	6	5	15	22	15
Sassuolo	14	3	5	6	17	30	14
Chievo	14	3	3	8	11	18	12
Bologna	14	2	6	6	16	26	12
Livorno	14	3	3	8	13	23	12
Sampdoria	14	2	5	7	15	24	11
Catania	14	2	3	9	10	26	9

38-round season (19x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

Leading goalscorers

12 Giuseppe Rossi (Fiorentina)
8 Alessio Cerci (Torino)
7 Domenico Berardi (Sassuolo)
7 Jose Callejon (Napoli)
7 Gonzalo Higuain (Napoli)
7 Rodrigo Palacio (Internazionale)
7 Carlos Tevez (Juventus)

KAZAKHSTAN

Division split after 22-round regular season; teams carried forward half the points (rounded up) gained in the regular season and all the rest of their regular-season record

KAZAKHSTAN – CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Aktobe (C)	32	20	6	6	46	22	43
Astana	32	19	5	8	54	35	42
Kairat	32	12	12	8	44	38	33
Shakhter	32	12	7	13	43	45	26
Ordabasy	32	11	8	13	33	37	26
Irtysh	32	12	8	12	41	39	24

KAZAKHSTAN – RELEGATION GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tobol	32	14	6	12	48	33	35
Atyrau	32	10	11	11	26	38	28
Zhetysu	32	6	17	9	22	32	22
Taraz	32	7	9	16	30	38	21
Vostok (R)[1]	32	6	13	13	20	37	20
Akzhayik (R)	32	7	10	15	37	50	19

[1]Vostok relegated after losing rel/prom play-off

KAZAKH CUP

Final

Nov 10 - Astana (Arena)
Taraz 0
Shakhter 1 (Khizhnichenko 53)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 24,500. **Ref:** Aleshin

LATVIA

LATVIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ventspils (C)	27	21	4	2	65	19	67
Skonto	27	18	8	1	68	11	62
Daugava D'ls	27	15	7	5	44	19	52
Daugava Riga	27	14	6	7	44	21	48
Metalurgs	27	11	7	9	54	35	40
Jurmala	27	7	5	15	20	52	26
Spartaks	27	7	4	16	30	49	25
Jelgava	27	5	8	14	26	46	23
Metta/LU[1]	27	4	7	16	15	47	19
Ilukstes (R)	27	2	6	19	26	93	12

[1]Metta/LU stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off

LITHUANIA

LITHUANIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zalgiris (C)	32	22	7	3	77	19	73
Atlantas	32	22	5	5	64	23	71
Ekranas	32	20	4	8	58	34	64
Suduva	32	18	8	6	73	33	62
Kruoja	32	13	9	10	46	47	48
Banga	32	10	5	17	39	56	35
Siauliai	32	6	7	19	34	65	25
Dainava	32	4	5	23	27	74	17
Tauras (R)	32	3	2	27	25	92	11

NORWAY

Nov 10: Brann 4 Tromso 1; Viking 2 Sarpsborg 1; Molde 0 Start 1; Stromsgodset 4 Haugesund 0; Valerenga 2 Sandnes Ulf 0; Lillestrom 0 Rosenborg 3; Odd 3 Honefoss 2; Sogndal 1 Aalesund 2.

NORWAY – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Stroms'set (C)	30	19	6	5	66	26	63
Rosenborg	30	18	8	4	50	25	62
Haugesund	30	15	6	9	41	39	51
Aalesund	30	14	7	9	55	44	49
Viking	30	12	10	8	41	36	46
Molde	30	12	8	10	47	38	44
Odd	30	11	7	12	43	39	40
Brann	30	11	6	13	46	46	39
Start	30	10	8	12	43	46	38
Lillestrom	30	9	9	12	37	44	36
Valerenga	30	10	6	14	41	50	36
Sogndal	30	8	9	13	33	48	33
Sandnes Ulf	30	9	6	15	36	58	33
Sarpsborg[1]	30	8	7	15	40	58	31
Tromso (R)	30	7	8	15	41	50	29
Honefoss (R)	30	6	11	13	34	47	29

[1]Sarpsborg stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off

NORWEGIAN CUP

Final

Nov 24 - Oslo (Ullevaal)
Molde 4 (Rindaroy 16, Berget 71, Hoseth 82, Hoiland 90)
Rosenborg 2 (Diskerud 17, Reginiussen 49)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 24,828. **Ref:** Moen

POLAND

Regular season

Nov 8: Jagiellonia 1 Zawisza 1; Gornik 3 Wisla 2.
Nov 9: Piast 1 Cracovia 1; Podbeskidzie 3 Lechia 1; Lech 4 Ruch 2.
Nov 10: Slask 1 Korona 1; Widzew 0 Legia 1.
Nov 11: Pogon 1 Zaglebie 1.
Nov 22: Zaglebie 0 Piast 2; Wisla 1 Korona 0.
Nov 23: Zawisza 2 Widzew 0; Jagiellonia 3 Slask 1; Legia 3 Pogon 1.
Nov 24: Lechia 0 Ruch 0; Gornik 2 Podbeskidzie 0.
Nov 25: Cracovia 1 Lech 6.
Nov 28: Jagiellonia 0 Lechia 1.
Nov 29: Pogon 1 Zawisza 1; Wisla 3 Slask 0.
Nov 30: Korona 2 Widzew 1; Piast 2 Gornik 0; Lech 1 Zaglebie 1.
Dec 1: Ruch 3 Cracovia 2; Podbeskidzie 1 Legia 0.

POLAND – REGULAR

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Legia	18	12	1	5	38	19	37
Wisla	18	9	7	2	26	11	34
Gornik	18	10	4	4	32	23	34
Lech	18	8	6	4	30	19	30
Pogon	18	7	7	4	27	25	28
Ruch	18	6	8	4	23	25	26
Piast	18	7	4	7	20	26	25
Zawisza	18	6	6	6	26	21	24
Cracovia	18	7	3	8	26	29	24
Lechia	18	5	8	5	22	26	23
Jagiellonia	18	6	4	8	27	25	22
Slask	18	5	6	7	25	26	21
Korona	18	5	4	9	25	31	19
Podbeskidzie	18	3	7	8	14	26	16
Zaglebie	18	3	5	10	13	23	14
Widzew	18	4	2	12	17	36	14

30-round regular season (15x2); top 8 will form championship group, bottom 8 will form relegation group (from which the bottom 2 will go down)

PORTUGAL

Nov 23: Benfica 1 Braga 0; Porto 1 Nacional 1.
Nov 24: Rio Ave 0 Estoril 2; Setubal 1 Arouca 0; Maritimo 3 Gil Vicente 2; Pacos de Ferreira 1 Belenenses 0; Guimaraes 0 Sporting 1.
Nov 25: Olhanense 0 Academica 1.
Nov 29: Braga 4 Olhanense 1.
Nov 30: Academica 1 Porto 0.
Dec 1: Arouca 1 Maritimo 2; Belenenses 0 Gil Vicente 0; Nacional 2 Setubal 2; Rio Ave 1 Benfica 3; Sporting 4 Pacos de Ferreira 0.
Dec 2: Estoril 0 Guimaraes 2.

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sporting	11	8	2	1	28	9	26
Benfica	11	8	2	1	20	8	26
Porto	11	7	3	1	20	8	24
Gil Vicente	11	5	3	3	13	11	18
Estoril	11	5	2	4	18	16	17
Nacional	11	4	4	3	15	12	16
Guimaraes	11	5	1	5	11	10	16
Braga	11	5	0	6	13	13	15
Academica	11	4	2	5	6	13	14
Rio Ave	11	4	1	6	9	12	13
Maritimo	11	4	1	6	18	22	13
Setubal	11	3	4	4	15	19	13
Belenenses	11	2	4	5	9	13	10
Olhanense	11	2	3	6	6	15	9
Arouca	11	2	2	7	6	15	8
Pacos Ferreira	11	2	2	7	9	20	8

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated

ROMANIA

Nov 7: Sageata 3 Astra 4.
Nov 8: Vaslui 1 Petrolul 1; CFR 1 Dinamo 0.
Nov 9: Botosani 0 Ceahlaul 1.
Nov 10: Viitorul 0 Pandurii 1.
Nov 11: Gaz Metan 1 Concordia 0; Poli 1 Otelul 0; Corona 1 Brasov 2.
Nov 22: Concordia 4 Sageata 0; Ceahlaul 1 Poli 0; Otelul 1 Vaslui 2.
Nov 23: Pandurii 1 Steaua 1.
Nov 24: Astra 5 Botosani 0; Dinamo 1 Gaz Metan 0.
Nov 25: Universitatea 3 Corona 2; Brasov 0 CFR 0; Petrolul 3 Viitorul 0.
Nov 27: Vaslui 0 Concordia 0.
Nov 29: Universitatea 2 Brasov 0; Poli 1 Astra 2.
Nov 30: Viitorul 4 Otelul 3; Vaslui 3 Ceahlaul 0; Sageata 0 Dinamo 1.
Dec 1: Botosani 0 Concordia 2; Corona 1 Pandurii 1; Steaua 1 Petrolul 1.
Dec 2: Gaz Metan 2 CFR 0.

ROMANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Astra	15	11	2	2	40	15	35
Steaua	13	9	4	0	29	9	31
Petrolul	16	8	7	1	23	11	31
Pandurii	16	8	4	4	33	19	28
Ceahlaul	16	7	5	4	19	15	26
Dinamo	16	7	4	5	22	15	25
Vaslui[1]	16	7	4	5	19	13	25
Gaz Metan	16	7	4	5	20	17	25
CFR	16	5	7	4	17	18	22
Concordia	14	6	3	5	18	15	21
Poli	16	5	4	7	15	18	19
Botosani	16	5	4	7	14	25	19
Sageata	16	4	3	9	15	31	15
Brasov	16	3	5	8	15	21	14
Otelul	16	4	2	10	18	32	14
Universitatea	15	3	4	8	15	27	13
Viitorul	15	3	4	8	10	27	13
Corona	16	1	4	11	12	26	7

34-round season (17x2); bottom 4 will be relegated

[1]Vaslui's 8pt deduction (because of debts to an agent) was overturned on appeal

RUSSIA

Nov 8: Ural 1 Rostov 4.
Nov 9: Tom 2 Lokomotiv 0; Krylia Sovetov 1 Dynamo 2.
Nov 10: Spartak 4 Zenit 2; Amkar 1 Anzhi 0; CSKA 4 Terek 1; Rubin 0 Krasnodar 1; Kuban 4 Volga 0.
Nov 22: Zenit 0 Rostov 2.
Nov 23: Tom 0 Rubin 1; Amkar 3 Kuban 1; CSKA 1 Spartak 0.
Nov 24: Lokomotiv 1 Dynamo 0; Ural 1 Krylia Sovetov 1; Anzhi 0 Volga 0.
Nov 25: Krasnodar 3 Terek 2.
Nov 30: Dynamo 3 Ural 0.
Dec 1: Terek 1 Zenit 1; Krylia Sovetov 1 Krasnodar 0; Spartak 6 Volga 1.
Dec 2: Anzhi 0 Tom 2; Rostov 0 CSKA 0; Kuban 1 Lokomotiv 3; Rubin 3 Amkar 0.

RUSSIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lokomotiv	18	12	3	3	37	16	39
Zenit	18	11	4	3	38	19	37
Spartak	18	11	3	4	36	20	36
CSKA	18	10	4	4	24	18	34
Dynamo	18	9	5	4	30	21	32
Krasnodar	18	9	3	6	29	24	30
Amkar	18	8	6	4	22	18	30
Rostov	18	6	6	6	23	23	24
Kuban	18	6	5	7	25	26	23
Rubin	18	5	8	5	21	14	23
Krylia Sovetov	18	4	9	5	18	22	21
Volga	18	5	3	10	16	35	18
Tom	18	4	3	11	13	26	15
Ural	18	2	6	10	15	35	12
Terek	18	1	7	10	11	23	10
Anzhi	18	0	7	11	12	30	7

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated, 3rd & 4th bottom will enter rel/prom play-offs

NICARAGUA

Record eight in a row

Real Esteli became the first Central American team to win eight successive league titles, beating Walter Ferreti in the apertura Final.

PANAMA

Tauro champions again

Tauro dedicated winning their 12th domestic title to 25-year-old striker Luis Renteria, who has been in hospital undergoing treatment for systemic lupus and lupus nephritis since September.

"We gave our all and this is for Luis because he deserves it," said defender Luis Moreno after a 1-0 victory over San Francisco in the apertura Final. It was a first title success as coach for Rolando Palma.

Here we come...Orlando City will be joining MLS in 2015

USA

Orlando join in 2015

While David Beckham considers whether to set up an MLS side in Miami, Orlando City will become league's 21st team, joining in the 2015 season along with New York City.

Building work on a new 18,000-seat stadium in Orlando is due to begin in the spring.

SCOTLAND

Regular season

Nov 9: Ross County 1 Celtic 4; St Johnstone 3 Kilmarnock 1; Motherwell 0 Dundee United 4; Aberdeen 1 Hearts 3; Hibernian 0 Inverness 2; Partick 0 St Mirren 3.
Nov 17: St Mirren 2 Ross County 1.
Nov 23: St Mirren 0 Hibernian 0; Celtic 3 Aberdeen 1; Dundee United 4 Partick 1; Hearts 2 Ross County 2; Inverness 1 St Johnstone 0; Kilmarnock 0 Motherwell 2.

SCOTLAND – REGULAR

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Celtic	13	10	3	0	30	12	33
Inverness	13	9	1	3	21	11	28
Motherwell	14	8	1	5	16	18	25
Dundee Utd	14	6	5	3	25	10	23
Aberdeen	14	7	2	5	20	14	23
St Johnstone	14	6	3	5	22	15	21
Hibernian	14	4	4	6	9	14	16
St Mirren	13	4	3	6	14	21	15
Partick	14	3	4	7	12	24	13
Ross County	13	3	2	8	15	27	11
Kilmarnock	14	2	3	9	14	23	9
Hearts[1]	14	3	3	8	12	21	-3

33-round regular season (11x3); top 6 will form championship group, bottom 6 will form relegation group (from which the bottom team will go down and the 2nd bottom will enter rel/prom play-offs)
[1]15pts deducted for going into administration

Leading goalscorers

10 Billy McKay (Inverness)
8 Stevie May (St Johnstone)
7 Niall McGinn (Aberdeen)

SPAIN

Friday, November 8

Granada 3 (El Arabi 48, 59, 77)
Malaga 1 (Juanmi 54) Att: 15,000

Osasuna 0
Almeria 1 (Rodri 18) Att: 14,654

Saturday, November 9

Athletic Bilbao 2 (Mikel Rico 72, Aduriz 84)
Levante 1 (Barral 33) Att: 34,000

Celta Vigo 0
Rayo Vallecano 2 (Jonathan Viera 24, Larrivey 72) Att: 20,696

Getafe 1 (Pedro Leon 18)
Elche 1 (Boakye 61) Att: 7,000

Real Madrid 5 (Cristiano Ronaldo 12, pen 26, 76, Benzema 18, Khedira 36)
Real Sociedad 1 (Griezmann 61) Att: 77,427

Sunday, November 10

Betis 1 (Jorge Molina pen 90+2)
Barcelona 4 (Neymar 35, Pedro 37, Fabregas 63, 79) Att: 45,000

Espanyol 1 (Sergio Garcia 23)
Sevilla 3 (Fazio 3, Vitolo 10, Bacca 58) Att: 21,000

Valencia 2 (Pabon 29, Feghouli 76)
Valladolid 2 (Javi Guerra 9, Garcia 50) Att: 35,000

Villarreal 1 (Juanfran og 79)
Atletico Madrid 1 (Mario og 2) Att: 18,000

Friday, November 22

Valladolid 0
Osasuna 1 (Oier 84) Att: 17,500

Saturday, November 23

Almeria 0
Real Madrid 5 (Cristiano Ronaldo 3, Benzema 61, Bale 72, Isco 75, Morata 81) Att: 13,605

Atletico Madrid 7 (Raul Garcia 26, 52, Lopo og 37, Villa 49, 78, Diego Costa 69, Adrian 90+2)
Getafe 0 Att: 35,000

Barcelona 4 (Iniesta pen 20, Fabregas pen 41, Sanchez 72, Pedro 90)
Granada 0 Att: 71,518

Real Sociedad 4 (Vela 6, 61, 78, 81)
Celta Vigo 3 (Rafinha 23, 57, Alex Lopez 28) Att: 24,634

Sunday, November 24

Elche 2 (Fidel 57, Cristian Herrera 84)
Valencia 1 (Juan Bernat 73) Att: 31,240

Levante 0
Villarreal 3 (Bruno Soriano pen 13, Uche 74, 89) Att: 16,000

Rayo Vallecano 1 (Saul 81)
Espanyol 4 (Sergio Garcia pen 27, pen 51, 83, Stuani 85) Att: 8,924

Sevilla 4 (Bacca 2, Mbia 43, Vitolo 59, Iborra 88)
Betis 0 Att: 40,150

Monday, November 25

Malaga 1 (Juanmi 38)
Athletic Bilbao 2 (San Jose 68, Muniain 86) Att: 25,000

Friday, November 29

Getafe 1 (Pedro Leon 79)
Levante 0 Att: 3,000

Villarreal 1 (Bruno Soriano 32)
Malaga 1 (Weligton 90+3) Att: 16,000

Saturday, November 30

Celta Vigo 3 (Orellana 26, Oubina 49, Charles 59)
Almeria 1 (Suso 9) Att: 18,947

Elche 0
Atletico Madrid 2 (Koke 63, Diego Costa 74) Att: 29,115

Espanyol 1 (Cordoba 31)
Real Sociedad 2 (Griezmann 69, Stuani og 88) Att: 14,575

Real Madrid 4 (Bale 33, 64, 89, Benzema 36)
Valladolid 0 Att: 68,655

Sunday, December 1

Athletic Bilbao 1 (Muniain 70)
Barcelona 0 Att: 35,950

Betis 2 (Amaya 27, Verdu 80)
Rayo Vallecano 2 (Bueno 51, 90+1) Att: 32,355

Granada 1 (Brahimi pen 61)
Sevilla 2 (Bacca 23, Gameiro 87) Att: 17,500

Valencia 3 (Jonas 45, 48, 54)
Osasuna 0 Att: 30,000

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	15	13	1	1	42	9	40
Atletico	15	13	1	1	40	9	40
Real Madrid	15	12	1	2	44	17	37
Athletic	15	9	2	4	23	19	29
Villarreal	15	8	4	3	25	14	28
Sociedad	15	6	5	4	25	21	23
Getafe	15	7	2	6	18	21	23
Sevilla	15	6	4	5	29	27	22
Valencia	15	6	2	7	21	23	20
Espanyol	15	5	3	7	18	21	18
Elche	15	4	5	6	15	20	17
Granada	15	5	2	8	12	19	17
Levante	15	4	5	6	13	21	17
Celta	15	4	3	8	20	23	15
Malaga	15	3	5	7	17	22	14
Osasuna	15	4	1	10	11	25	13
Rayo	15	4	1	10	15	36	13
Valladolid	15	2	6	7	16	25	12
Almeria	15	3	3	9	16	32	12
Betis	15	2	4	9	14	30	10

38-round season (19x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

Leading goalscorers

17 Cristiano Ronaldo (Real Madrid)
15 Diego Costa (Atletico Madrid)
9 Antoine Griezmann (Real Sociedad)
8 Karim Benzema (Real Madrid)
8 Jonas (Valencia)
8 Lionel Messi (Barcelona)
8 Alexis Sanchez (Barcelona)
8 David Villa (Atletico Madrid)

SWEDEN

SWEDEN – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Malmo (C)	30	19	6	5	56	30	63
AIK	30	17	7	6	54	32	58
Gothenburg	30	16	6	8	49	31	54
Kalmar	30	14	10	6	35	26	52
Helsingborg	30	14	7	9	61	41	49
Elfsborg	30	12	10	8	49	34	46
Djurgarden	30	12	8	10	38	44	44
Atvidaberg	30	11	7	12	37	37	40
Norrkoping	30	11	6	13	45	47	39
Hacken	30	10	7	13	37	41	37
Mjallby	30	10	6	14	46	47	36
Gefle	30	7	13	10	34	42	34
Bromm'karna	30	8	8	14	33	54	32
Halmstad[1]	30	7	10	13	32	46	31
Oster (R)	30	6	10	14	27	43	28
Syrianska (R)	30	3	5	22	26	64	14

[1]Halmstad stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off

Top goalscorers

15 Imad Khalili (Helsingborg)
14 Tobias Hysen (Gothenburg)
14 Kennedy Igboananike (AIK)
12 Mostapha El Kabir (Hacken)
12 Amadou Jawo (Djurgarden)

SWITZERLAND

Nov 23: Basle 4 Thun 1; Young Boys 3 Lausanne 2.
Nov 24: Zurich 4 Sion 1; Aarau 2 Grasshopper 4; Lucerne 3 St Gallen 1.
Nov 30: Grasshopper 1 Lucerne 2.
Dec 1: St Gallen 2 Zurich 1; Lausanne 0 Thun 2; Young Boys 2 Basle 2.

SWITZERLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Basle	16	8	7	1	30	15	31
Young Boys	16	8	4	4	29	17	28
Grasshopper	16	8	4	4	24	15	28
Lucerne	16	8	4	4	22	21	28
St Gallen	16	7	5	4	20	16	26
Thun	16	5	6	5	23	23	21
Zurich	16	5	3	8	20	27	18
Sion	15	4	5	6	14	17	17
Aarau	15	4	3	8	25	33	15
Lausanne	16	1	1	14	11	34	4

36-round season (9x4); bottom team will be relegated

TURKEY

Nov 8: Eskisehirspor 2 Akhisar 0; Elazigspor 0 Kayseri Erciyesspor 1.
Nov 9: Kasimpasa 3 Gaziantepspor 0; Sivasspor 2 Bursaspor 1; Kayserispor 0 Besiktas 3; Karabukspor 2 Rizespor 1.
Nov 10: Konyaspor 2 Antalyaspor 0; Genclerbirligi 3 Trabzonspor 2; Fenerbahce 2 Galatasaray 0.
Nov 23: Rizespor 0 Kayserispor 2; Bursaspor 1 Kasimpasa 1; Galatasaray 2 Sivasspor 1.
Nov 24: Kayseri Erciyesspor 1 Genclerbirligi 0; Gaziantepspor 3 Elazigspor 1; Trabzonspor 1 Eskisehirspor 0; Antalyaspor 1 Fenerbahce 2.
Nov 25: Besiktas 3 Konyaspor 1; Akhisar 0 Karabukspor 1.
Nov 29: Sivasspor 0 Antalyaspor 3; Elazigspor 1 Bursaspor 2.
Nov 30: Kayserispor 0 Akhisar 0; Genclerbirligi 1 Gaziantepspor 3; Fenerbahce 3 Besiktas 3.
Dec 1: Trabzonspor 3 Kayseri Erciyesspor 1; Eskisehirspor 0 Karabukspor 0; Kasimpasa 1 Galatasaray 1.
Dec 2: Konyaspor 2 Rizespor 1.

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fenerbahce	13	10	2	1	31	15	32
Kasimpasa	13	8	2	3	27	15	26
Besiktas	13	7	4	2	24	14	25
Galatasaray	13	6	5	2	20	14	23
Trabzonspor	13	7	2	4	18	13	23
Sivasspor	13	7	1	5	23	18	22
Eskisehirspor	13	6	2	5	16	10	20
Bursaspor	13	5	3	5	14	16	18
Antalyaspor	13	4	5	4	15	13	17
Karabukspor	13	4	5	4	10	11	17
Akhisar	13	4	4	5	13	13	16
Konyaspor	13	5	1	7	15	20	16
Rizespor	13	4	3	6	16	19	15
Gaziantepspor	13	4	2	7	17	26	14
Genclerbirligi	13	4	1	8	13	17	13
K Erciyesspor	13	3	3	7	9	18	12
Kayserispor	13	2	4	7	11	21	10
Elazigspor	13	2	1	10	13	32	7

34-round season (17x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

UKRAINE

Nov 8: Illichivets 3 Metalurh Zaporizhya 1.
Nov 9: Zorya 0 Tavriya 0; Vorskla 2 Karpaty 2; Hoverla 0 Shakhtar 2.
Nov 10: Metalurh Donetsk 3 Metalist 0; Chornomorets 2 Sevastopol 0; Volyn 1 Dynamo 4.
Nov 22: Metalurh Zaporizhya 1 Zorya 1.
Nov 23: Vorskla 0 Chornomorets 1; Shakhtar 4 Sevastopol 0; Karpaty 2 Metalurh Donetsk 2; Dnipro 3 Illichivets 1.
Nov 24: Tavriya 2 Volyn 2; Dynamo 3 Hoverla 0.
Nov 29: Metalurh Donetsk 4 Vorskla 1.
Nov 30: Hoverla 2 Tavriya 1; Illichivets 1 Metalist 1.

ANGOLA

Holders retain cup

Petro Atletico retained the Angolan Cup, beating Desportivo Huila 1-0 in the Final with a goal from striker Ladji Keita.

EGYPT

Zamalek drought over

Zamalek ended a five-year trophy drought when they beat Wadi Degla 3-0 to win the Egyptian Cup.

Arch rivals Zamalek and Al Ahly have been drawn in separate groups in the new Egyptian Premier League, which kicks off on December 26. The competition has been abandoned twice since February 2012, when dozens of spectators lost their lives during a game between El Masry and Ahly.

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

A fifth title victory

Akonangui, who are based in the north-eastern town of Ebebiyin, won the league for a fifth time.

MOZAMBIQUE

Coach kicked out

Liga Muculmana, who were champions in 2010 and 2011, have won their third league title and will enter next year's CAF Champions League. They wrapped up the 2013 Mocambola with two games to spare by beating relegation-bound Matchedje of Maputo 1-0.

Fourth-place Costa do Sol's Portuguese coach Diamantino Miranda was expelled from the country for saying that Mozambicans were "a bunch of thieves" after a dispute with a ref.

SUDAN

Mourada drop out

Al Merreikh from Omdurman were crowned Sudanese Premier League champions for a 19th time.

Al Mourada, who won the title in 1968 and are the country's third-biggest club – after Omdurman sides Merreikh and runners-up Al Hilal – were relegated for the first time.

Dec 1: Zorya 3 Dnipro 0; Volyn 2 Metalurh Zaporizhya 0.
Dec 2: Sevastopol 1 Dynamo 2.

UKRAINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shakhtar	17	12	2	3	44	14	38
Dynamo	18	11	3	4	36	19	36
Metalist	16	10	5	1	30	13	35
Chornomorets	17	10	5	2	19	10	35
Dnipro	16	10	4	2	31	16	34
Zorya	18	7	6	5	24	16	27
Vorskla	18	6	8	4	26	27	26
Metalurh D	18	7	5	6	28	30	26
Illichivets	18	6	2	10	16	21	20
Volyn	18	5	5	8	18	28	20
Karpaty	17	4	7	6	18	24	19
Sevastopol	18	5	4	9	20	33	19
Hoverla	18	5	2	11	16	26	17
Arsenal[1]	13	3	1	9	10	28	10
Metalurh Z	17	1	5	11	16	29	8
Tavriya	17	2	2	13	12	30	8

30-round season (15x2); bottom 2 will be relegated
[1]Arsenal withdrew from league in late October because of financial difficulties; subsequent games cancelled

Leading goalscorers

14 Marko Devic (Metalist)
10 Junior Moraes (Metalurh Donetsk)
8 Yannick Boli (Zorya)
8 Dieumerci Mbokani (Dynamo)
8 Yevhen Seleznyov (Dnipro)
8 Andrii Yarmolenko (Dynamo)

SOUTH AMERICA

SUDAMERICANA CUP

Semi-finals

1st legs - Nov 20/21; 2nd legs - Nov 27/28
Libertad (Par) v Lanus (Arg)
1-2, 1-2 (agg 2-4)
Sao Paulo (Bra) v Ponte Preta (Bra)
1-3, 1-1 (agg 2-4)

ARGENTINA

1st tournament

Nov 8: Rafaela 3 Godoy Cruz 1.
Nov 9: Olimpo 0 Quilmes 1; All Boys 2 Gimnasia 1; Estudiantes 1 Rosario 1; Newell's 1 San Lorenzo 1.
Nov 10: Belgrano 2 Colon 0; Boca 2 Tigre 1; Racing 0 Argentinos 1; Velez 0 River Plate 0.
Nov 11: Lanus 2 Arsenal 0.
Nov 15: Gimnasia 0 Argentinos 0.
Nov 16: All Boys 2 Lanus 3; Quilmes 1 Racing 1; Godoy Cruz 2 Estudiantes 1; San Lorenzo 4 Belgrano 2.
Nov 17: Rosario 2 Velez 3; River Plate 1 Olimpo 3; Arsenal 3 Boca 2.
Nov 18: Tigre 2 Newell's 1.
Nov 22: Velez 2 Godoy Cruz 1.
Nov 23: Argentinos 1 Quilmes 1; Olimpo 1 Rosario 0; Rafaela 2 San Lorenzo 2.
Nov 24: Lanus 0 Gimnasia 0; Boca 0 All Boys 2; Newell's 1 Arsenal 1; Racing 1 River Plate 0.
Nov 25: Estudiantes 1 Colon 0; Belgrano 2 Tigre 0.
Nov 29: Godoy Cruz 0 Olimpo 1; Rosario 1 Racing 1.
Nov 30: Colon 0 Velez 2; Tigre 3 Rafaela 1; Arsenal 1 Belgrano 4; All Boys 3 Newell's 1.
Dec 1: Gimnasia 3 Quilmes 2; San Lorenzo 0 Estudiantes 0; River Plate 1 Argentinos 0; Lanus 2 Boca 2.

ARGENTINA – 1ST TOURNAMENT

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
San Lorenzo	18	9	5	4	29	17	32
Lanus	18	8	6	4	30	16	30
Velez	18	8	6	4	24	16	30
Newell's	18	8	6	4	25	19	30
Arsenal	18	7	8	3	21	18	29
Boca	18	8	4	6	24	23	28
Estudiantes	18	6	9	3	16	12	27
Belgrano	18	7	5	6	27	20	26
Rafaela	17	7	4	6	23	24	25
Argentinos	18	7	4	7	16	17	25
Gimnasia	18	6	7	5	20	23	25
Godoy Cruz	18	6	6	6	17	15	24
Rosario	18	6	5	7	20	23	23
All Boys	18	5	7	6	19	18	22
Tigre	18	6	4	8	18	21	22
River Plate	18	5	5	8	11	13	20
Olimpo	18	5	5	8	18	25	20
Quilmes	18	5	5	8	13	22	20
Racing	18	3	4	11	10	24	13
Colon[1]	17	3	3	11	8	23	6

19-round tournament (19x1); no relegation after 1st tournament
[1]6pts deducted for failing to pay a transfer fee

Leading goalscorers

9 Mauro Matos (All Boys)
9 Cesar Pereyra (Belgrano)
8 Ignacio Piatti (San Lorenzo)
8 Diego Vera (Rafaela)
7 Emmanuel Gigliotti (Boca)
7 Lucas Pratto (Velez)
7 Santiago Silva (Lanus)

BRAZIL

Nov 9: Portuguesa 0 Coritiba 0; Bahia 0 Mineiro 0; Flamengo 1 Goias 1.
Nov 10: Paranaense 3 Sao Paulo 0; Cruzeiro 3 Gremio 0; Ponte Preta 0 Vitoria 3; Internacional 2 Botafogo 1; Nautico 0 Criciuma 1; Corinthians 1 Fluminense 0; Vasco 2 Santos 2.
Nov 13: Goias 2 Ponte Preta 0; Gremio 1 Vasco 0; Criciuma 2 Paranaense 1; Botafogo 0 Portuguesa 0; Coritiba 0 Corinthians 1; Vitoria 1 Cruzeiro 3; Sao Paulo 2 Flamengo 0.
Nov 14: Santos 3 Bahia 0; Mineiro 2 Internacional 1; Fluminense 2 Nautico 0.
Nov 16: Botafogo 4 Paranaense 0; Coritiba 1 Criciuma 2.
Nov 17: Cruzeiro 2 Ponte Preta 2; Vitoria 2 Santos 0; Corinthians 0 Vasco 0; Fluminense 2 Sao Paulo 1; Portuguesa 2 Mineiro 0; Nautico 0 Bahia 1; Goias 3 Internacional 1; Gremio 2 Flamengo 1.
Nov 23: Vasco 2 Cruzeiro 1; Criciuma 1 Vitoria 1; Mineiro 4 Goias 1.
Nov 24: Flamengo 1 Corinthians 0; Ponte Preta 1 Gremio 1; Paranaense 6 Nautico 1; Santos 1 Fluminense 0; Sao Paulo 1 Botafogo 1; Bahia 1 Portuguesa 0; Internacional 0 Coritiba 0.
Nov 30: Fluminense 2 Mineiro 2; Corinthians 0 Internacional 0.
Dec 1: Vasco 2 Nautico 0; Vitoria 4 Flamengo 2; Ponte Preta 0 Portuguesa 2; Criciuma 1 Sao Paulo 0; Cruzeiro 1 Bahia 2; Coritiba 2 Botafogo 1; Gremio 1 Goias 0; Santos 2 Paranaense 1.

BRAZIL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cruzeiro (C)	37	23	6	8	76	36	75
Gremio	37	18	10	9	42	35	64
Paranaense	37	17	10	10	60	48	61
Goias	37	16	11	10	48	41	59
Botafogo	37	16	10	11	52	41	58
Vitoria	37	16	10	11	57	51	58
Mineiro	37	15	11	11	47	36	56
Santos	37	14	12	11	48	38	54
Sao Paulo	37	14	8	15	39	39	50
Corinthians	37	11	17	9	27	21	50
Flamengo	37	12	12	13	42	45	48
Bahia	37	12	12	13	36	43	48
Portuguesa	37	12	11	14	50	46	47
Internacional	37	11	14	12	51	52	47
Criciuma	37	13	7	17	49	60	46
Coritiba	37	11	12	14	41	45	45
Vasco	37	11	11	15	49	56	44
Fluminense	37	11	10	16	41	46	43
Ponte Preta (R)	37	9	9	19	37	55	36
Nautico (R)	37	4	5	28	21	79	17

38-round season (19x2); bottom 4 will be relegated

Leading goalscorers

18 Ederson (Paranaense)
16 Dinei (Vitoria)
15 Fernandao (Bahia)
15 Hernane (Flamengo)
14 Cicero (Santos)
14 Gilberto (Portuguesa)
14 William (Ponte Preta)

BRAZILIAN CUP

Final, 1st leg

Nov 20
Paranaense 1 (Marcelo 17)
Flamengo 1 (Amaral 30)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 15,484. **Ref:** De Oliveira

Final, 2nd leg

Nov 27
Flamengo 2 (Elias 88, Hernane 90+5)
Paranaense 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 68,857. **Ref:** Vuaden
Flamengo 3-1 on agg
Sent off: Andre Santos (Flamengo) 88min; Ciro (Paranaense) 88min

COLOMBIA

COLOMBIA – CLAUSURA: REGULAR – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nacional (Q)	18	11	4	3	29	12	37
Millonarios (Q)	18	8	7	3	28	18	31
Junior (Q)	18	8	6	4	29	24	30
Dep Cali (Q)	18	7	7	4	22	13	28
O Caldas (Q)	18	8	4	6	24	17	28
Santa Fe (Q)	18	7	7	4	24	17	28
Pasto (Q)	18	6	9	3	21	20	27
Itagui (Q)	18	8	3	7	20	20	27
Ind Medellin	18	6	6	6	24	19	24
La Equidad	18	5	8	5	24	21	23
Patriotas	18	5	8	5	17	17	23
Envigado	18	5	7	6	17	22	22
Tolima	18	4	9	5	19	23	21
Huila	18	5	5	8	24	30	20
A Petrolera	18	4	6	8	14	24	18
Cucuta[1]	18	4	4	10	19	27	16
Chico	18	3	6	9	21	29	15
Quindio (R)[1]	18	4	2	12	10	33	14

Top 8 enter clausura championship play-offs
[1]Team with worst points average over 3 most recent seasons (Quindio) are relegated; team with 2nd worst average (Cucuta) enter rel/prom play-off

PERU

PERU – 2ND STAGE: GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Garcilaso[1] (Q)	44	22	12	10	63	39	77
Cristal	44	22	9	13	76	45	75
Alianza Lima[2]	44	19	12	13	57	46	70
Cesar Vallejo	44	18	15	11	56	46	69
Huancayo	44	14	14	16	55	62	56
Melgar	44	10	20	14	45	49	50
Un Comercio[4]	44	11	11	22	39	59	44
Pacifico[4]	44	10	14	20	31	62	44

PERU – 2ND STAGE: GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Univ'tario (Q)	44	21	13	10	61	39	76
Cajamarca	44	19	11	14	52	49	68
Inti Gas	44	17	12	15	63	65	63
Juan Aurich	44	17	11	16	66	50	62
Cienciano	44	15	14	15	46	56	59
Leon	44	14	14	18	49	48	56
San Martin[3]	44	12	11	21	46	60	49
J Galvez (R)[4]	44	10	9	25	55	88	39

Group winners qualify for championship play-off
[1]1pt deducted
[2]Awarded 1 bonus point because reserve team finished runners-up in their league
[3]Awarded 2 bonus points because reserve team won their league
[4]The 2 teams with fewest points in either group are relegated; since Union Comercio and Pacifico had the same number of points, they play off to decide which of them goes down with Jose Galvez

CONCACAF

MEXICO

Apertura

Regular season

Nov 8: Morelia 1 Puebla 0; Santos 2 Veracruz 2.
Nov 9: America 1 Toluca 1; Atlante 2 Chiapas 0; Pachuca 0 Queretaro 1; Monterrey 2 Guadalajara 1; Leon 5 Tijuana 0; Atlas 0 Tigres 1.
Nov 10: Pumas 2 Cruz Azul 2.

MEXICO – APERTURA: REGULAR – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
America (Q)	17	11	4	2	31	12	37
Santos (Q)	17	9	6	2	32	20	33
Leon (Q)	17	8	6	3	25	14	30
Cruz Azul (Q)	17	8	5	4	21	17	29
Toluca (Q)	17	6	9	2	33	17	27
Morelia (Q)	17	8	3	6	26	23	27
Queretaro (Q)	17	7	5	5	20	19	26
Tigres (Q)	17	6	7	4	23	20	25
Chiapas	17	6	7	4	26	25	25
Tijuana	17	5	6	6	20	23	21
Monterrey	17	5	5	7	22	23	20
Veracruz	17	4	8	5	20	24	20
Puebla	17	4	7	6	19	21	19
Pachuca	17	3	8	6	14	18	17
Atlas	17	1	9	7	18	29	12
Guadalajara	17	2	6	9	16	30	12
Atlante	17	3	3	11	17	35	12
Pumas	17	1	8	8	8	21	11

Top 8 entered apertura championship play-offs; no relegation after apertura

Quarter-finals

1st legs - Nov 23/24; 2nd legs - Nov 30/Dec 1
Morelia v Leon 3-3, 0-4 (agg 3-7)
Queretaro v Santos 2-3, 1-3 (agg 3-6)
Tigres v America
2-2, 1-1 (agg 3-3, America on away goals)
Toluca v Cruz Azul 3-0, 1-1 (agg 4-1)

TOGO

Maiden championship

Anges de Notse won the league championship for the first time in their history.

TUNISIA

Last-gasp winner

CS Sfaxien beat DR Congo's TP Mazembe to win the CAF Confederation Cup.

Leading 2-0 through goals from Didier Ibrahim Ndong and Taha Yassine Khenissi on the first leg, the Tunisians were pegged back by Cheibane Traore and Mbwana Samatta in the return before Fakhereddine Ben Youssef made it 3-2 on aggregate two minutes from time.

Sfaxien will face the African Champions League winners Al Ahly of Egypt in the CAF Super Cup.

Late intervention...Ben Youssef

ZAMBIA

Red Arrows' dozen

A 4-1 victory over Red Arrows saw Nkana clinch their 12th league title and claim a place in the 2014 CAF Champions League.

ZIMBABWE

Goal difference at top

Defending champions Dynamos retained their Zimbabwean Premier League title on goal difference from Highlanders and Harare City.

Highlanders made up for some of their league disappointment with a 3-0 victory over How Mine in the Cup Final. However, due to a three-year ban they will not be able to enter the CAF Confederation Cup and the beaten finalists will take their place.

CLUB FOOTBALL

NICARAGUA

Apertura

Final, 1st leg

Nov 23
Walter Ferreti 0
Real Esteli 0
Ref: Davila

Final, 2nd leg

Nov 30
Real Esteli 1 (Lopez 6)
Walter Ferreti 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Mendoza
Real Esteli 1-0 on agg

PANAMA

Apertura

Final

Nov 29 - Panama City (Rommel Fernandez)
Tauro 1 (Sanjur 28)
San Francisco 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Pitty

UNITED STATES

Championship play-offs

Semi-finals

1st legs - Nov 9/10; 2nd legs - Nov 23/24
Houston v Kansas City 0-0, 1-2 (agg 1-2)
Salt Lake v Portland 4-2, 1-0 (agg 5-2)

AFRICA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Final

1st leg

Nov 2
Orlando Pirates (SAf) 1 (Matlaba 90+3)
Al Ahly (Egy) 1 (Aboutraika 14)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Haimoudi (Alg)
Orlando Pirates: Meyiwa - Jele, Gcaba, Mahamutsa, Matlaba, Segolela, Jali, Manyisa, Klate, Myeni (Makola 76), Bacela (Mbesuma 82).
Al Ahly: Ekramy - Abdel Fadil, Gomaa, Naguib, Moawad, Soliman, Fathy, Ashour, Said (Shedid 90), Aboutraika (Rabia 81), Abdel Zaher (Da Silva 65).

2nd leg

Nov 10
Al Ahly 2 (Aboutraika 54, Abdel Zaher 78)
Orlando Pirates 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Gassama (Gam)
Al Ahly 3-1 on agg
Al Ahly: Ekramy - Fathy, Moawad, Abdel Fadil, Gomaa, Naguib, Ashour, Soliman (Shedid 73), Aboutraika (Moteab 90+2), Said, Abdel Zaher (Rabia 86). *Sent off: Abdel Fadil 83min.*
Orlando Pirates: Meyiwa - Mahamutsa, Lekgwathi, Matlaba, Gcaba, Segolela (Mbesuma 76), Manyisa, Masalesa (Ntshumayelo 90+4), Klate (Makola 86), Myeni, Bacela.

CONFEDERATION CUP

Final

1st leg

Nov 23
CS Sfaxien (Tun) 2 (Ndong 16, Khenissi 90+1)
TP Mazembe (DRC) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Otogo-Castane (Gab)
CS Sfaxien: Jeridi - Boulaabi, Youssoufou, Maaloul, Ben Salah, Ndong, Sassi, Libere (Challouf 77), Ben Youssef, Hannachi (Kamoun 88), Kouyate (Khenissi 77).
TP Mazembe: Kidiaba - Nkulukuta, Kimwaki, Sunzu, Kasusula, Sinkala, Ulimwengu (Asante 84), Mputu, Awako (Singuluma 46), Kalaba (Diarra 57), Samatta.

2nd leg

Nov 30
TP Mazembe 2 (Traore 10, Samatta 24)
CS Sfaxien 1 (Ben Youssef 88)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Bennett (SAf)
CS Sfaxien 3-2 on agg
TP Mazembe: Kidiaba - Frimpong, Kimwaki, Sunzu, Kasusula, Sinkala, Mputu, Singuluma (Kalaba 46), Asante (Ulimwengu 72), Traore, Samatta (Diarra 70).
CS Sfaxien: Jeridi - Boulaabi, Youssoufou, Maaloul, Ben Salah, Ndong, Sassi, Libere (Kamoun 59), Ben Youssef, Hannachi (Challouf 79), Kouyate (Khenissi 87).

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Championship Final

Nov 22 - Malabo
Akonangui 1 (Yangua pen 27)
The Panthers 0
HT: 1-0
Sent off: Bicoro (Akonangui) 73min; Pensy (The Panthers) 83min

KENYA

KENYA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Gor Mahia (C)	30	17	9	4	32	15	60
Leopards	30	14	8	8	39	25	50
Sofapaka	30	13	11	6	35	22	50
KCB	30	11	14	5	40	22	47
Tusker	30	10	12	8	30	23	42
Bandari	30	10	12	8	30	28	42
Thika Utd	30	11	9	10	27	31	42
Ulinzi Stars	30	10	11	9	22	21	41
Chemelil Sugar	30	10	10	10	27	24	40
Muhoroni Youth	30	9	8	13	21	40	35
Sony Sugar	30	7	13	10	19	28	34
Western Stima	30	6	14	10	23	25	32
Mathare Utd	30	5	17	8	24	27	32
City Stars	30	7	11	12	24	36	32
Homeboyz (R)	30	6	11	13	22	29	29
Karuturi (R)	30	4	10	16	17	36	22

MADAGASCAR

MADAGASCAR – CHAM'SHIP PLAY-OFFS – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CNaPS (C)	6	4	0	2	13	3	12
Saint Michel	6	3	1	2	7	4	10
Tana Formation	6	3	1	2	5	5	10
FCE	6	1	0	5	5	18	3

MOZAMBIQUE

MOZAMBIQUE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Muculmana (C)	26	15	7	4	41	16	52
Ferroviario B	26	13	6	7	32	24	45
HCB Songo	26	11	9	6	29	16	42
Costa do Sol	26	10	9	7	32	21	39
Ferroviario M	26	11	6	9	26	21	39
Chibuto	26	11	6	9	28	27	39
Maxaquene	26	11	6	9	28	27	39
Ferroviario N	26	9	9	8	23	25	36
D'vo Nacala	26	8	11	7	20	18	35
Es'la Vermelha	26	7	9	10	17	25	30
Textil	26	7	8	11	20	30	29
Chingale (R)	26	7	7	12	13	19	28
Vilankulo (R)	26	7	5	14	17	29	26
Matchedje (R)	26	4	4	18	15	43	16

REUNION

REUNION – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts[1]
St-Marienne (C)	22	13	6	3	37	15	67
St-Pauloise	22	11	8	3	40	21	63
Tamponnaise	22	11	8	3	31	19	63
St-Pierroise	22	10	8	4	31	16	60
St-Louisienne	22	10	5	7	36	24	57
Excelsior	22	8	7	7	27	20	53
Jeanne d'Arc	22	8	6	8	29	29	52
Petite-Ile	22	6	8	8	24	30	48
Possession	22	6	6	10	16	23	46
Benedictins	22	6	5	11	25	34	45
St-Denis (R)	22	5	6	11	18	34	43
Riviere-S (R)	22	0	3	19	9	58	25

[1]4pts for a win, 2pts for a draw, 1pt for a defeat

SEYCHELLES

SEYCHELLES – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cote d'Or (C)	18	14	2	2	41	13	44
La Passe	18	13	3	2	44	14	42
St Michel Utd	18	8	6	4	37	17	30
N Dynamo	18	7	4	7	37	24	25
St Louis Suns	18	6	6	6	23	22	24
Anse Reunion	18	7	3	8	33	36	24
The Lions	18	5	5	8	17	26	20
St Francis	18	4	5	9	24	44	17
Lightstars[1]	18	3	4	11	33	58	13
St Roch (R)	18	3	2	13	16	51	11

[1]Lightstars stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off

SUDAN

SUDAN – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Merreikh (C)	26	20	3	3	51	17	63
Al Hilal Om'n	26	18	7	1	58	17	61
Al Ahli S'di	26	15	6	5	37	16	51
Al Ahli Atbara	26	11	6	9	29	27	39
Khartoum	26	10	8	8	25	22	38
Al M Al Fasher	26	9	9	8	26	33	36
Al Ahli K'toum	26	9	8	9	19	21	35
Al Hilal K'gli	26	6	13	7	19	21	31
Al Ittihad	26	6	10	10	21	30	28
Al Amal	26	4	13	9	26	26	25
Al Nsoor[1]	26	8	4	14	21	39	25
Al Nil[2]	26	6	6	14	19	27	24
Al Mourada (R)	26	3	8	15	18	45	17
Al Ahli WM (R)	26	3	7	16	17	45	16

[1]3pts deducted
[2]Al Nil stay in top division after winning rel/prom play-off

TOGO

TOGO – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Anges (C)	30	16	11	3	33	14	59
Douanes	30	17	6	7	45	24	57
Foadan	30	11	15	4	20	10	48
DyTo	30	12	11	7	39	29	47
Semassi	30	13	8	9	26	26	47
Gomido	30	12	9	9	30	26	45
ASKO	30	11	10	9	27	23	43
Agaza	30	11	10	9	32	28	43
Unisport	30	11	10	9	25	21	43
Togo Port	30	11	10	9	38	33	43
Gbikinti	30	9	12	9	25	27	39
Maranatha	30	10	8	12	33	33	38
Koroki (R)	30	9	5	16	21	35	32
Kotoko (R)	30	6	11	13	21	26	29
Etoile F'te (R)	30	4	9	17	20	43	21
Tchaoudjo (R)	30	2	5	23	16	53	11

ZAMBIA

ZAMBIA – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nkana (C)	30	17	8	5	45	25	59
Zesco	30	16	9	5	52	22	57
Nchanga	30	15	6	9	37	30	51
Zanaco	30	13	10	7	41	26	49
Red Arrows	30	11	14	5	30	22	47
G Buffaloes	30	12	9	9	34	29	45
Konk'a Blades	30	12	8	10	29	29	44
Power D'mos	30	11	9	10	33	30	42
Roan Utd	30	10	11	9	32	29	41
Kabwe	30	11	7	12	27	27	40
K Mine Police	30	11	5	14	26	37	38
Napsa Stars	30	10	7	13	28	35	37
Nkwazi (R)	30	9	7	14	29	34	34
Lime Hot's (R)	30	7	6	17	23	49	27
Kalulushi (R)	30	6	6	18	24	43	24
Forest R'rs (R)	30	2	12	16	20	43	18

ZIMBABWE

ZIMBABWE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dynamos (C)	30	14	12	4	43	22	54
Highlanders	30	16	6	8	45	27	54
Harare City	30	14	12	4	43	25	54
Platinum	30	14	8	8	40	29	50
CAPS Utd	30	14	7	9	42	34	49
Chicken Inn	30	12	8	10	40	35	44
Triangle Utd	30	11	9	10	43	35	42
Shabanie Mine	30	12	6	12	33	37	42
How Mine	30	12	6	12	27	32	42
Hwange	30	11	8	11	36	30	41
Black Rhinos	30	10	10	10	33	35	40
Buffaloes	30	11	6	13	40	43	39
B Mambas (R)	30	11	5	14	34	39	38
Monom'pa (R)	30	6	7	17	24	47	25
Triple B (R)	30	5	7	18	27	60	22
Motor Act'n (R)	30	3	11	16	17	37	20

ASIA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Final

1st leg

Oct 26
Seoul (SKo) 2 (Escudero 12, Damjanovic 83)
Guangzhou Evergrande (Chn) 2 (Elkeson 30, Gao Lin 59)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 55,501. **Ref:** Irmatov (Uzb)
Seoul: Kim Yong-dae - Choi Hyo-jin, Kim Jin-kyu, Adilson, Kim Ju-young, Koh Myong-jin, Go Yo-han (Yun Il-lok 77), Ha Dae-sung, Molina, Damjanovic, Escudero.
Guangzhou: Zeng Cheng - Feng Xiaoting, Sun Xiang (Zhao Xuri 87), Kim Young-gwon, Zhang Linpeng, Huang Bowen, Conca, Zheng Zhi, Elkeson, Gao Lin (Rong Hao 75), Muriqui.

2nd leg

Nov 9
Guangzhou Evergrande 1 (Elkeson 58)
Seoul 1 (Damjanovic 62)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 55,847. **Ref:** Shukralla (Bhn)
Agg 3-3; Guangzhou Evergrande on away goals
Guangzhou: Zeng Cheng - Feng Xiaoting, Sun Xiang, Kim Young-gwon, Zhang Linpeng, Conca, Zheng Zhi, Huang Bowen, Zhao Xuri (Gao Lin 67), Elkeson, Muriqui (Qin Sheng 90).
Seoul: Kim Yong-dae - Cha Du-ri, Kim Jin-kyu, Adilson, Kim Ju-young, Koh Myong-jin, Go Yo-han (Yun Il-lok 46), Ha Dae-sung (Choi Hyun-tae 84), Molina, Damjanovic, Escudero.

SOUTH KOREA

Dramatic finale

A 94th-minute goal from Kim Won-il saw Pohang Steelers beat Ulsan 1-0 and leapfrog their hosts to win a dramatic fifth league title and complete their first domestic double.

The only side in the top flight without any foreign players, Pohang had trailed their opponents by two points going into the south-eastern derby at the Munsu stadium. Ulsan had missed their chance to make certain of the title four days earlier when they lost 2-1 at Busan IPark.

Jeonbuk Motors took third place with a 1-1 draw at home to Seoul, with Dejan Damjanovic's 19th goal of the season making the Montenegrin the league's top scorer for a third consecutive season.

Seoul, whose Colombian midfielder Mauricio Molina topped the charts with 13 assists, finished a point behind Jeonbuk to take the fourth and final AFC Champions League place.

Daejeon Citizen and Daegu were relegated, while Gangwon face second-tier champions Sangju Sangmu in a two-legged relegation/promotion play-off.

Double winners...Pohang

AUSTRALIA

Regular season

Oct 11: Sydney 2 Newcastle 0.
Oct 12: Central Coast 1 Western Sydney 1; Melbourne Victory 0 Melbourne Heart 0.
Oct 13: Wellington Phoenix 1 Brisbane 2; Adelaide 3 Perth 1.
Oct 18: Adelaide 2 Melbourne Victory 2.
Oct 19: Melbourne Heart 2 Central Coast 2; Brisbane 4 Sydney 0.
Oct 20: Newcastle 0 Perth 0; Western Sydney 1 Wellington Phoenix 1.
Oct 25: Melbourne Victory 1 Brisbane 0.
Oct 26: Central Coast 1 Adelaide 0; Sydney 0 Western Sydney 2.
Oct 27: Wellington Phoenix 0 Newcastle 0; Perth 1 Melbourne Heart 0.
Nov 1: Western Sydney 2 Adelaide 1.
Nov 2: Perth 1 Sydney 0; Newcastle 2 Central Coast 2.
Nov 3: Brisbane 3 Melbourne Heart 0.
Nov 4: Melbourne Victory 3 Wellington Phoenix 2.
Nov 8: Melbourne Heart 0 Western Sydney 1.
Nov 9: Wellington Phoenix 1 Perth 1; Adelaide 1 Newcastle 2; Sydney 3 Melbourne Victory 2.
Nov 10: Central Coast 0 Brisbane 1.
Nov 15: Melbourne Heart 0 Sydney 2.
Nov 16: Perth 1 Adelaide 1; Western Sydney 1 Melbourne Victory 0.
Nov 17: Newcastle 2 Brisbane 1.
Nov 22: Brisbane 3 Western Sydney 1.
Nov 23: Sydney 2 Wellington Phoenix 1; Melbourne Victory 3 Adelaide 0; Perth 1 Central Coast 2.
Nov 24: Newcastle 3 Melbourne Heart 1.
Nov 29: Central Coast 0 Melbourne Victory 0.
Nov 30: Brisbane 1 Perth 0; Sydney 2 Newcastle 0.
Dec 1: Wellington Phoenix 0 Western Sydney 0; Melbourne Heart 3 Adelaide 3.

AUSTRALIA – REGULAR SEASON

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brisbane	8	6	0	2	15	5	18
West Sydney	8	4	3	1	9	6	15
Sydney	8	5	0	3	11	10	15
Melbourne V	8	3	3	2	11	8	12
Newcastle	8	3	3	2	9	9	12
Central Coast	7	2	4	1	8	7	10
Perth	8	2	3	3	6	8	9
Adelaide	8	1	3	4	11	15	6
Wellington P	7	0	4	3	6	9	4
Melbourne H	8	0	3	5	6	15	3

27-round regular season (9x3); top 6 will enter championship play-offs; no relegation from this league

JAPAN

Nov 10: Shonan 1 Kashima 2; Yokohama 1 Nagoya 2; Tokyo 1 Cerezo 2; Kashiwa 1 Sanfrecce 1; Oita 1 Albirex 3; Sagan 1 Jubilo 0; Omiya 1 Ventforet 2; Vegalta 3 Urawa 3; Kawasaki 2 Shimizu 0.
Nov 23: Kashima 1 Sagan 2; Urawa 1 Kawasaki 3; Shimizu 1 Omiya 0; Jubilo 0 Yokohama 1; Cerezo 1 Sanfrecce 0; Tokyo 2 Shonan 1; Ventforet 0 Oita 0; Albirex 1 Vegalta 0; Nagoya 3 Kashiwa 2.
Nov 30: Omiya 3 Jubilo 0; Yokohama 0 Albirex 2; Cerezo 1 Kashima 2; Sanfrecce 1 Shonan 0; Sagan 4 Urawa 1; Vegalta 1 Shimizu 2; Kashiwa 4 Tokyo 1; Nagoya 0 Ventforet 0; Oita 0 Kawasaki 1.

JAPAN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Yokohama	33	18	8	7	49	30	62
Sanfrecce	33	18	6	9	49	29	60
Kashima	33	18	5	10	60	50	59
Urawa	33	17	7	9	64	51	58
Kawasaki	33	17	6	10	64	51	57
Cerezo	33	15	11	7	48	30	56
Albirex	33	16	4	13	46	42	52
Tokyo	33	15	6	12	59	47	51
Shimizu	33	15	5	13	47	55	50
Nagoya	33	13	8	12	47	46	47
Vegalta	33	11	12	10	41	36	45
Kashiwa	33	12	9	12	54	58	45
Sagan	33	13	6	14	54	63	45
Omiya	33	13	3	17	44	48	42
Ventforet	33	8	12	13	30	41	36
Shonan (R)	33	6	7	20	34	61	25
Jubilo (R)	33	3	11	19	37	55	20
Oita (R)	33	2	8	23	30	64	14

34-round season (17x2); bottom 3 will be relegated

Leading goalscorers

26 Yoshito Okubo (Kawasaki)
22 Kengo Kawamata (Albirex)
20 Yohei Toyoda (Sagan)
19 Yoichiro Kakitani (Cerezo)
19 Masato Kudo (Kashiwa)
19 Yuya Osako (Kashima)

KYRGYZSTAN

Division split after 14-round regular season; teams carried forward full regular-season record

KYRGYZSTAN – CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Alay (C)	20	13	4	3	38	19	43
Dordoi	20	12	4	4	53	16	40
Abdish-Ata	20	9	6	5	50	20	33
Alga	20	8	7	5	36	14	31

KYRGYZSTAN – RELEGATION GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ala-Too	20	11	3	6	41	23	36
Neftchi	20	9	3	8	29	24	30
FC-95	20	3	1	16	14	45	10
FC-96 (R)	20	1	0	19	7	107	3

SOUTH KOREA

Division split after 26-round regular season; teams carried forward full regular-season record

S KOREA – CHAMPIONSHIP GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pohang (C)	38	21	11	6	63	38	74
Ulsan	38	22	7	9	63	37	73
Jeonbuk	38	18	9	11	61	49	63
Seoul	38	17	11	10	59	46	62
Suwon	38	15	8	15	50	43	53
Busan	38	14	10	14	43	41	52
Incheon	38	12	14	12	48	46	50

S KOREA – RELEGATION GROUP – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Seongnam	38	17	9	12	51	42	60
Jeju	38	16	10	12	51	46	58
Chunnam	38	9	13	16	34	45	40
Gyeongnam	38	8	13	17	42	55	37
Gangwon[1]	38	8	12	18	37	64	36
Daegu (R)	38	6	14	18	36	57	32
Daejeon (R)	38	7	11	20	39	68	32

[1]Gangwon enter rel/prom play-off

TAIWAN

TAIWAN – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Tatung (C)	14	10	2	2	40	20	32
Taipower	14	10	1	3	50	17	31
Taichung	14	10	1	3	44	14	31
Ming Chuan	14	4	5	5	28	28	17
NSTC	14	4	5	5	29	35	17
Tainan	14	3	6	5	28	33	15
Air Source	14	1	4	9	16	42	7
TC Dragons	14	0	4	10	15	61	4

TAJIKISTAN

TAJIKISTAN – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ravshan (C)	18	14	4	0	26	5	46
Istiqlol	18	14	1	3	47	8	43
Xayr	18	9	7	2	26	14	34
Regar-TadAZ	18	10	3	5	26	18	33
Khujand	18	6	5	7	17	21	23
Parvoz	18	4	7	7	14	29	19
Vakhsh	18	4	4	10	11	17	16
Energetik	18	4	4	10	13	23	16
CSKA Pomir	18	2	5	11	10	26	11
Istaravshan	18	2	2	14	13	42	8
Panjsher (R)[1]	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

[1]Panjsher withdrew from league after 5 rounds; results expunged

TURKMENISTAN

TURKMENISTAN – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
HTTU (C)	36	28	3	5	85	27	87
Balkan	36	28	2	6	86	25	86
Altyn Asyr	36	20	5	11	73	37	65
Asgabat	36	20	4	12	76	52	64
Merw	36	16	9	11	52	37	57
Ahal	36	16	8	12	62	41	56
Sagadam	36	13	8	15	44	54	47
Lebap	36	6	5	25	40	82	23
Dasoguz	36	4	3	29	25	102	15
Talyp	36	3	5	28	22	108	14

UZBEKISTAN

UZBEKISTAN – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bunyodkor (C)	26	19	4	3	59	13	61
Lokomotiv	26	19	3	4	63	21	60
Nasaf	26	18	4	4	64	27	58
Pakhtakor	26	17	3	6	45	25	54
Olmaliq	26	11	7	8	46	43	40
Buxoro	26	10	3	13	33	44	33
Metallurg	26	10	3	13	36	45	33
Dinamo	26	8	8	10	28	36	32
Neftchi	26	9	3	14	28	31	30
Sogdiana	26	8	4	14	34	54	28
Navbahor	26	7	6	13	30	48	27
Qizilqum	26	8	1	17	28	48	25
Guliston (R)	26	6	2	18	28	62	20
Shortan (R)	26	4	5	17	22	47	17

KEY TO TABLES
(C) = champions
(Q) = qualified for next stage
(R) = relegated

January 2014 Vol 54 No 4

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Thanks this issue to Mike Hughes, Debbie Millett, Peter Neish, Dave Rallis

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Annual sub is for 12 months (13 issues, prices include postage) UK: £54.70 Europe/Eire (inc. VAT): 89.66euros (airmail) USA: $131.08 (airmail) Rest of world: £95.53 (airmail)

Periodicals paid at Rahway, NJ Postmaster: send address changes to *World Soccer*, c/o MAIL America, 365 Blair Road, Avenel NJ 07001, USA. USPS004075

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THE QUALIFIERS BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

The World Cup debutants

Safet Susic's side have reached their first-ever major finals. By Sasa Ibrulj

Cometh the hour...Bicakcic, a goalscoring hero in the win in Slovakia, wins the ball from Vladimir Weiss

When Vedad Ibisevic's close-range shot hit the back of the net at the Darius & Girenas stadium in Lithuania, the Stuttgart striker sealed Bosnia's place in the finals of a major tournament for the first time and sent hundreds of thousands of delirious supporters out on to the streets – not just in the homeland, but across the whole of Europe and everywhere that the huge Bosnian diaspora lives.

Back home in Sarajevo, a victory parade was organised for the team and coach Safet Susic told a crowd of more than 50,000: "This is what we all dreamed for. Now, let's enjoy it!"

Victory over Lithuania confirmed first place in group G and brought with it a sense of relief for Susic's side. In their two previous qualifying campaigns – for the 2010 World Cup and Euro 2012 – Bosnia performed well but ended up second to Spain and France in their respective groups, and then lost in the play-offs to Portugal on both occasions.

To book their trip to Brazil, Susic opted for attacking, aggressive football and stuck to it for most of the campaign. His team began with an 8-1 thrashing of Liechtenstein and followed that up with a 4-1 victory at home to Latvia.

A trip to group favourites Greece was up next, and although the home side dominated for much of the game, Susic and his players showed great maturity to hold out for a very important goalless draw. After Lithuania were easily dispatched 3-0, the sign that Bosnia could win this group came in March 2013 when they hosted Greece.

The visitors had only conceded more than two goals in a competitive match just three times in the last 10 years, but they were demolished 3-1 in front of a packed Stadion Bilino Polje in Zenica. Edin Dzeko scored twice, and Ibisevic the other, as the country started to believe that this was their time.

A more than comfortable 5-0 win over Latvia in Riga followed and two wins over Slovakia would have sealed Bosnia's place in Brazil. However, a 1-0 loss at home put them on the verge of blowing everything. Four days later, with 7,000 fans backing them in Zilina, Bosnia trailed 1-0 at half-time. But up stepped Eintracht Braunschweig defender Ermin Bicakcic, winning just his third cap, to head home an equaliser and restore hope with 20 minutes remaining.

Then substitute Izet Hajrovic, who just weeks before had switched his nationality from Swiss to Bosnian and had played only eight minutes previously for his new side, came on and launched a superb strike for the most important goal of his career.

The expected home victory over Liechtenstein was a warm-up for the Lithuania game in Kaunas, in which Bosnia struggled to score until the 68th minute and Ibisevic's goal.

It was a moment that brings the magic of the World Cup to Bosnia for the first time since independence in 1992. WS

For the record

QUALIFYING CAMPAIGN
GROUP G

07.09.12	Liechtenstein (a)	8-1
11.09.12	Latvia (h)	4-1
12.10.12	Greece (a)	0-0
16.10.12	Lithuania (h)	3-0
22.03.13	Greece (h)	3-1
07.06.13	Latvia (a)	5-0
06.09.13	Slovakia (h)	0-1
10.09.13	Slovakia (a)	2-1
11.10.13	Liechtenstein (h)	4-1
15.10.13	Lithuania (a)	1-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bosnia	10	8	1	1	30	6	25
Greece	10	8	1	1	12	4	25
Slovakia	10	3	4	3	11	10	13
Lithuania	10	3	2	5	9	11	11
Latvia	10	2	2	6	10	20	8
Lie'stein	10	0	2	8	4	25	2

Players used in qualifiers

TEN
Asmir BEGOVIC (900 mins), Edin DZEKO (900 mins), Emir SPAHIC (900 mins), Vedad IBISEVIC (892 mins)
NINE
Sejad SALIHOVIC (777 mins), Zvjezdan MISIMOVIC (773 mins), Senad LULIC (692 mins)
EIGHT
Miralem PJANIC (657 mins), Haris MEDUNJANIN (551 mins)
SEVEN
Adnan ZAHIROVIC (498 mins), Avdija VRSAJEVIC (412 mins)
SIX
Mensur MUJDZA (463 mins)
FIVE
Ognjen VRANJES (450 mins), Miroslav STEVANOVIC (75 mins)
FOUR
Ermin BICAKCIC (360 mins), Senijad IBRICIC (66 mins)
THREE
Ervin ZUKANOVIC (195 mins), Edin VISCA (66 mins), Izet HAJROVIC (49 mins)
TWO
Toni SUNJIC (91 mins), Elvir RAHIMIC (81 mins)
ONE
Zoran KVRZIC (28 mins), Muamer SVRAKA (12 mins), Damir VRANCIC (12 mins)

SCORERS IN QUALIFYING
TEN GOALS
Edin DZEKO
EIGHT
Vedad IBISEVIC
FIVE
Zvjezdan MISIMOVIC
THREE
Miralem PJANIC
ONE
Ermin BICAKCIC, Izet HAJROVIC, Senad LULIC, Haris MEDUNJANIN

The coach

Experience test...Susic

Safet Susic

Taking Bosnia to their first major tournament is the biggest achievement of his career for a man who was once voted the country's best ever player. Although he has previously worked in France and Turkey, he lacks real coaching experience and summer 2014 will be a huge test of his abilities.

The key players

Edin Dzeko

The Manchester City striker is paired up front with Vedad Ibisevic and, between them, they contributed 18 goals in 10 matches during qualification. He is the vital component in Susic's attacking philosophy.

Defensive rock...Spahic

Strike threat...Dzeko

Emir Spahic

The captain is a true leader and Bosnia's strength at the back. At 33, the Bayer Leverkusen defender has huge experience and this will be the highlight of his playing career.

Miralem Pjanic

The team's most creative player is destined to be a future leader. Only 23, he has already been capped 46 times and is the key supply line to the strikers.

Creative hub...Pjanic (left)

The unanswered questions

Will there be any "new Bosnians"?

The brutal war in the 90s destroyed the country and caused the huge migration to western Europe. A quarter of the pre-war population now lives abroad and, with a poor domestic league, 80 per cent of Bosnia's national squad were raised outside the country, with many playing for other countries at youth level. Schalke's former Germany under-21 left-back Sead Kolasinac is the latest recruit.

How will they cope with tournament football?

With no previous experience of playing such important matches in such a short period of time, the narrow selection of quality players and limited alternatives could be a huge problem.

Setback...defeat by Argentina

Can they compete with the big boys?

Critics point to the fact that Bosnia's group was weak and that Greece was the only big win for Susic. Since he took over in March 2010 they have played 10 teams that will be in Brazil and won only three (Algeria, Ghana and Greece), losing easily to Argentina, Brazil, France, Germany, Mexico, Portugal and USA.

Reasons to be cheerful

Goals galore

Bosnia scored an average of three goals per game during qualifying, with only England, Germany and Holland managing more.

Fantastic goalkeeper

Although they struggle for reliability at the back, goalkeeper Asmir Begovic is excellent. The Stoke City stopper opted for Bosnia at the expense of Canada, where he grew up, and has saved his country on numerous occasions.

Keeping busy...Begovic

Complete underdogs

Expectations are extremely low as Bosnia are total underdogs, but they will be hugely motivated.

Reasons to be fearful

Lack of choice

Susic admits that his is a "team of 12 to 13 good players" and their alternatives are poor. One injury or suspension could be disastrous.

Defensive problems

The plan is to score as many goals as possible. They are weak at the back and there is no defensive midfielder to protect the backline.

No experience

Bosnia are the only debutants at the 2014 World Cup. Although most of their players are in top European leagues, that doesn't mean anything in a competition like the World Cup.

THE QUALIFIERS ENGLAND

No expectations

England will not be among the favourites in Brazil this summer. By Gavin Hamilton

Hope for the future...Tottenham winger Townsend has made a promising start to his England career

England will travel to Brazil in the summer with little of the bravado that has accompanied previous World Cup campaigns. The low-key manner of qualification – squeezing through their group without losing but never in complete control – has reduced expectations of manager Roy Hodgson's squad.

After a bright start (a 5-0 win in Moldova), Hodgson's side ran up a series of draws (home to Ukraine, away in Poland, Montenegro and Ukraine) that left them needing wins over Poland and Montenegro in their final matches at Wembley to guarantee automatic qualification.

Ultimately, they were helped by their rivals all taking points off each other. But England can take heart from the fact they ended the qualifying campaign unbeaten.

Hodgson has rung the changes since taking over from Fabio Capello shortly before Euro 2012. The only players from the 2010 World Cup squad who are likely to make the 2014 finals are captain Steven Gerrard, Wayne Rooney, full-back Ashley Cole, goalkeeper Joe Hart and midfielders Frank Lampard and James Milner.

And there have been plenty of new faces brought in. Daniel Sturridge and Danny Welbeck are the likely partners for Rooney in central attack, while there have been debuts for Everton midfielder Ross Barkley, Tottenham Hotspur winger Andros Townsend and the Southampton trio of Rickie Lambert, Adam Lallana and Jay Rodriguez. West Ham United midfielder Ravel Morrison could be a wild card next summer after impressing for the under-21 side.

The "retirement" of big-name players John Terry and Rio Ferdinand has left Hodgson with few dominant personalities in defence, and the manager also has to handle the inevitable winding down of the international careers of Lampard, Gerrard and Cole.

The initial euphoria of direct qualification for the finals was quickly tempered by friendly defeats at Wembley by Chile and Germany. Although Hodgson fielded experimental teams in both games, the results confirmed the growing realisation that England will not travel to Brazil as one of the favourites to win the tournament. The last 16 is the expectation; anything beyond that will be a bonus.

While Hodgson has been applauded for England's successful World Cup qualification, his greatest achievement as England manager may turn out to be the lowering of expectations of the national side to a far more realistic level. Even though sponsors and commercial interests will talk up England's chances as the tournament approaches, there is little danger of the bandwagon spinning out of control. **WS**

For the record

QUALIFYING CAMPAIGN
GROUP H

07.09.12	Moldova (a)	5-0
11.09.12	Ukraine (h)	1-1
12.10.12	San Marino (h)	5-0
17.10.12	Poland (a)	1-1
22.03.13	San Marino (a)	8-0
26.03.13	Montenegro (a)	1-1
06.09.13	Moldova (h)	4-0
10.09.13	Ukraine (a)	0-0
11.10.13	Montenegro (h)	4-1
15.10.13	Poland (h)	2-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
England	10	6	4	0	31	4	22
Ukraine	10	6	3	1	28	4	21
Montenegro	10	4	3	3	18	17	15
Poland	10	3	4	3	18	12	13
Moldova	10	3	2	5	12	17	11
San Marino	10	0	0	10	1	54	0

Players used in qualifiers

TEN GAMES
Joe HART (900 mins)
EIGHT
Steven GERRARD (670 mins), Danny WELBECK (523 mins), James MILNER (453 mins)
SEVEN
Phil JAGIELKA (630 mins), Leighton BAINES (568 mins), Frank LAMPARD (519 mins), Tom CLEVERLEY (466 mins)
SIX
Wayne ROONEY (471 mins), Michael CARRICK (387 mins)
FIVE
Gary CAHILL (450 mins), Joleon LESCOTT (450 mins), Kyle WALKER (450 mins), Alex OXLADE-CHAMBERLAIN (324 mins)
FOUR
Glen JOHNSON (360 mins), Ashley COLE (315 mins), Jermain DEFOE (315 mins), Daniel STURRIDGE (228 mins), Theo WALCOTT (220 mins), Jack WILSHERE (168 mins)
THREE
Chris SMALLING (270 mins), Ashley YOUNG (127 mins)
TWO
Andros TOWNSEND (166 mins), Rickie LAMBERT (160 mins)
ONE
John TERRY (90 mins), Aaron LENNON (80 mins), Leon OSMAN (35 mins), Ross BARKLEY (30 mins), Jonjo SHELVEY (24 mins), Ryan BERTRAND (17 mins), Andy CARROLL (17 mins), Scott PARKER (15 mins)

SCORERS IN QUALIFYING
SEVEN GOALS
Wayne ROONEY
FOUR
Frank LAMPARD, Danny WELBECK
THREE
Jermain DEFOE
TWO
Steven GERRARD, Alex OXLADE-CHAMBERLAIN, Daniel STURRIDGE
ONE
Leighton BAINES, James MILNER, Rickie LAMBERT, Andros TOWNSEND, Ashley YOUNG (*plus two own goals*)

The coach

Self-confidence...Hodgson

Roy Hodgson

Contracted by the FA until the summer of 2016, the 66-year-old former Switzerland and Internazionale coach has managed to bring organisation and a quiet self-confidence to a job that was in danger of becoming impossible.

The key players

Wayne Rooney

England's only genuine world-class performer, he was reported to be unsettled at Manchester United last summer after falling out with manager Alex Ferguson, but he has been in excellent form for new boss David Moyes this autumn.

World class...Rooney

Steven Gerrard

Appointed captain by Hodgson ahead of Euro 2012 and now plays a more settled role in deep midfield, having reigned in his more cavalier instincts.

Lying deeper...Gerrard

Joe Hart

First-choice goalkeeper despite a lapse in form that resulted in him being dropped as Manchester City's first choice this season. Hodgson has kept faith, but the 26-year-old faces an uncertain winter and spring as he tries to win back his club position.

Unsettled form...goalkeeper Hart has struggled for form this season

The unanswered questions

Who will score the goals?

England are heavily reliant on Rooney, who was top scorer in qualifying but has never scored at a World Cup finals. He will probably play behind a main striker, Daniel Sturridge or Danny Welbeck, who are both untested at this level.

How good is Jack Wilshere?

The Arsenal midfielder has been hailed as England's great hope, but injuries have curtailed his impact on the international stage.

Injury plagued...Wilshere

Who plays in central defence?

Gary Cahill and Phil Jagielka are probably Hodgson's preferred central defensive partnership, but the pairing is far from established at the top level. There have been calls for John Terry – who quit international football in the wake of his acquittal of the charge of racially abusing Anton Ferdinand – to be brought back but Hodgson has ruled out that option.

Reasons to be cheerful

No unrealistic expectations

For once, there's no danger of the squad travelling to Brazil carrying the weight of a nation's expectations on their shoulders.

Youth to the fore

Hodgson has blooded a number of promising youngsters who will gain valuable experience for an assault on Euro 2016.

Hodgson's tournament experience

For the first time since Bobby Robson in 1990, England have a boss with previous experience of managing at a World Cup finals. Hodgson was in charge of Switzerland at the 1994 World Cup.

Big on experience...Hodgson in 1994

Reasons to be fearful

Lack of dressing-room leaders

There aren't many big personalities who can inspire the rest of the squad when the going gets tough.

The Premier League fixture list

The extra games played in England, and the lack of a winter break, could take its toll as players stagger into June.

Very little quality

Other than Rooney, England have few players who can be considered world class.

THE QUALIFIERS GREECE

Confident approach

Failure to secure automatic qualification did little to dent self-belief. By Lou Economopoulos

Job done...Greece celebrate reaching the 2014 World Cup finals with a draw in Bucharest

After finishing second to Bosnia-Herzegovina in one of the weaker qualifying groups, Greece secured their third appearance at a World Cup finals with a 4-2 aggregate victory over Romania in the play-offs.

Two goals from Kostas Mitroglou, plus one from Dimitris Salpingidis, set Portuguese coach Fernando Santos' side on their way with a 3-1 victory in the home leg, and Greece's place at a fifth major tournament in the last 10 years was secured with another Mitroglou goal in a draw in Bucharest.

While Salpingidis' belief that "the team has qualified in the last four major tournaments, showing that it is among the elite" is a little optimistic, the Euro 2004 champions will go to Brazil full of confidence. As Borusia Dortmund defender Sokratis Papastathopoulos says: "When you work hard, things come into place."

Much may depend on the predatory instincts of Mitroglou this summer, but the Greek Super League's top scorer – with 14 goals in his first 11 games this season – gave his country's supporters a serious fright when it was announced in December that he would have to undergo an exploratory operation following a knee injury sustained against Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League. Although he is expected to return to action early in the new year, his recovery will be closley monitored.

While the 25-year-old Mitroglou represents the future for Greek football, two of the Euro-winning squad from a decade ago are likely to still be involved in Brazil. Along with 36-year-old skipper Giorgos Karagounis, 34-year-old Kostas Katsouranis made 10 appearances in quaifying and he believes that qualification is the perfect antidote to the country's current financial problems.

"We made the Greeks forget all their worries," said Katsouranis after the draw in Romania. "This is what our objective is: to bring joy to the Greek people."

Automatic qualification was only missed out on by goal difference, with the advantage having swung Bosnia's way in March when they beat Greece 3-1 in Zenica following a goalless draw in Athens five months earlier.

Those were the only points Greece dropped all campaign and they were given a glimmer of hope when Bosnia lost at home to Slovakia in September and then found themselves a goal behind at half-time in the return. However, two second-half goals put Bosnia back in charge of the group and sent Greece to the play-offs. **WS**

For the record

QUALIFICATION CAMPAIGN
GROUP G

07.09.12	Latvia (a)	2-1
11.09.12	Lithuania (h)	2-0
12.10.12	Bosnia-H (h)	0-0
16.10.12	Slovakia (a)	1-0
22.03.13	Bosnia-H (a)	1-3
07.06.13	Lithuania (a)	1-0
06.09.13	Liechtenstein (a)	1-0
10.09.13	Latvia (h)	1-0
11.10.13	Slovakia (h)	1-0
15.10.13	Liechtenstein (h)	2-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bosnia-H	10	8	1	1	30	6	25
Greece	10	8	1	1	12	4	25
Slovakia	10	3	4	3	11	10	13
Lithuania	10	3	2	5	9	11	11
Latvia	10	2	2	6	10	20	8
Lie'stein	10	0	2	8	4	25	2

PLAY-OFFS

15.11.13	Romania (h)	3-1
09.11.13	Romania (a)	1-1

Players used in qualifiers

TWELVE MATCHES
Orestis KARNEZIS (1,080 mins)
ELEVEN
Socratis PAPASTATHOPOULOS (990 mins), Vasileios TOROSIDIS (972 mins)
TEN
Kostas KATSOURANIS (895 mins), Ioannis MANIATIS (818 mins), Georgios SAMARAS (809 mins), Alexandros TZIOLIS (783 mins), Kostas MITROGLOU (656 mins), Georgios KARAGOUNIS (459 mins)
NINE
Dimitris SALPINGIDIS (631 mins), Jose HOLEBAS (585 mins)
SEVEN
Theofanis GEKAS (405 mins)
SIX
Dimitrios SIOVAS (516 mins), Sotiris NINIS (346 mins), Lazaros CHRISTODOULOPOULOS (296 mins)
FOUR
Nikos SPIROPOULOS (360 mins)
THREE
Kostantinos FORTOUNIS (248 mins), Konstantinos MANOLAS (190 mins), Georgios TZAVELAS (164 mins), Andreas SAMARIS (65 mins)
TWO
Kyriakos PAPADOPOULOS (180 mins), Loukas VYNTRA (108 mins), Gkergki KONE (90 mins), Ioannis FETFATZIDIS (4 mins)
ONE
Avraam PAPADOPOULOS (90 mins), Panagiotis TACHTSIDIS (67 mins), Stelios MALEZAS (65 mins), Georgios FOTAKIS (14 mins), Charalampos MAVRIAS (11 mins), Stefanos ATHANASIADIS (5 mins), Dimitrios PAPADOPOULOS (5 mins)

Scorers in qualifiers
FIVE GOALS
Kostas MITROGLOU
FOUR
Dimitris SALPINGIDIS
TWO
Theofanis GEKAS
ONE
Lazaros CHRISTODOULOPOULOS, Georgios KARAGOUNIS, Sotiris NINIS, Nikos SPIROPOULOS

(*plus one own goal*)

The coach

Wanted...Santos

Fernando Santos

He has overseen 24 victories, 13 draws and only four defeats since joining in the summer of 2010 and led the side to the quarter-finals of Euro 2012. The team are unbeaten in the last eight matches and the Greek federation wants to keep him after the World Cup 2014.

The key players

Kostas Mitroglou

The most sought after Greek player of recent times, the multi-talented 25-year-old striker scored three of the four goals against Romania in the qualification play-off and has already notched four hat-tricks this season, three in the domestic Super League and one at Anderlecht in the Champions League.

Sought after...Mitroglou

Giorgos Karagounis

When the national team's engine starts to fail, Santos calls on his spark plug, the 36-year-old veteran, who now plays for Fulham. He has been the inspiration for the team since his debut in 1999 and has now made a record 131 appearances. He is known for his excellent ball control, deadly free-kicks from distance and for drawing fouls.

Inspirational...Karagounis

Jose Holebas

The German-born defender performed well during qualification, making numerous attacking runs down the left flank and crossing for his team-mates.

Adventurous...Holebas

The unanswered questions

Can Greece pull off another miracle?

After the surprise Euro 2004 triumph in Portugal, perhaps it's time for another miracle in the World Cup, where two previous appearances by the Greeks were total failures, with five defeats in six matches.

Euro champions...Greece in 2004

Will Greece keep scoring?

Kostas Mitroglou turned a once very defensive side into an attacking threat at the end of 2013, but will that flair and enterprise continue?

Can the opposition stop Mitroglou?

Few teams have been able to put a hold on Mitroglou's scoring spree this season, but it will be a different situation in Brazil.

Reasons to be cheerful

Exciting attack

With Mitroglou, Fanis Gekas, Giorgos Samaras and Dimitris Salpingidis to choses from up front, goals should be in plentiful supply.

Solid at the back

Greece may be scoring more goals, but they are still able to keep things tight at the back.

Team spirit

Santos, together with veteran captain Giorgos Karagounis, has instilled a team spirit which the team has not seen since the Euro 2004 triumph.

Reasons to be fearful

Slip up...Greece switch off and allow Bosnia to take advantage

Lapses in concentration

Although a tight unit most of the time, the defence can switch off at vital moments in a game. Santos will have to make sure this doesn't happen against opponets who will punish any slip.

Over confidence

It is a tendancy of the national side to take things easy when faced with lesser opponents – which can lead to disastrous results.

Discipline

There are one or two players who are prone to losing their cool when things don't go their way. This can lead to cards and suspensions.

THE QUALIFIERS RUSSIA

Capello leads the way

The Italian coach has inspired new confidence in an ageing side. By Victor Gusev

Solid...Vasili Berezutskiy climbs above everyone else, including team-mate Sergey Ignashevich against Northern Ireland

Twelve years after their last appearance at a World Cup finals, Russia were helped on their way to Brazil 2014 by a strict Italian coach and an unyielding Israeli team.

Under Fabio Capello, who replaced Dick Advocaat as boss of the national team in the summer of 2012, they started their qualification campaign with wins against Northern Ireland at home, Israel away and Portugal at home. Nine points out of nine made Russia look the most likely group winner, and despite 1-0 defeats in Lisbon and Belfast, Capello's side made good use of largely unexpected flops by their closest rivals Portugal.

That was especially true of Portugal's 1-1 draw at home to Israel in October. If it hadn't been for that result, Russia's own draw in the last game of the campaign, against Azerbaijan in Baku, would have cost them first place in the group and denied them direct qualification.

Capello, unlike his Dutch predecessor, spent most of his time in Russia and made trips all over the country to watch games, including unsafe places such as Makhachkala, where UEFA does not allow teams to go for Europa League games due to security problems.

Such scouting missions resulted in gradual changes to the squad, with veterans such as Konstantin Zyryanov, who had been an important part of the team that reached the semi-finals at Euro 2008, replaced by younger players. Capello's changes also received the backing of the supporters, who also have one eye on the 2018 tournament that is being held on home soil.

Strict team discipline introduced by the Italian worked well for players who had often abused the "relaxed" pre-game atmosphere in the past. And despite media complaints that the national team now remains closed to the press most of the time, domestic journalists still voted Capello the Russian sports coach of the year. **WS**

For the record

QUALIFYING CAMPAIGN
GROUP F

07.09.12	Northern Ireland (h)	2-0
11.09.12	Israel (a)	4-0
12.10.12	Portugal (h)	1-0
16.10.12	Azerbaijan (h)	1-0
07.06.13	Portugal (a)	0-1
14.08.13	Northern Ireland (a)	0-1
06.09.13	Luxembourg (h)	4-1
10.09.13	Israel (h)	3-1
11.10.13	Luxembourg (a)	4-0
15.10.13	Azerbaijan (a)	1-1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Russia	10	7	1	2	20	5	22
Portugal	10	6	3	1	20	9	21
Israel	10	3	5	2	19	14	14
Azerbaijan	10	1	6	3	7	11	9
N Ireland	10	1	4	5	9	17	7
Lux'bourg	10	1	3	6	7	26	6

Players used in qualifiers

TEN GAMES
Igor AKINFEEV (900 mins), Dmitry KOMBAROV (895 mins), Roman SHIROKOV (893 mins), Alexander KERZHAKOV (819 mins), Victor FAIZULIN (662 mins)
NINE
Vasili BEREZUTSKIY (810 mins), Sergey IGNASHEVICH (810 mins), Vladimir BYSTROV (509 mins)
EIGHT
Igor DENISOV (675 mins), Alexander KOKORIN (503 mins), Denis GLUSHAKOV (479 mins), Alexander SAMEDOV (459 mins)
FIVE
Alexey KOZLOV (419 mins), Alexander ANYUKOV (351 mins)
FOUR
Alan DZAGOEV (159 mins)
THREE
Andrey ESHCHENKO (155 mins)
TWO
Vladimir GRANAT (180 mins), Yury ZHIRKOV (110 mins)
ONE
Artyom DZYUBA (45 mins), Alexey IONOV (45 mins), Oleg SHATOV (45 mins), Fedor SMOLOV (24 mins), Pavel MAMAEV (8 mins), Denis CHERYSHEV (7 mins), Alexander RYAZANTSEV (7 mins), Georgy SHCHENNIKOV (5 mins)

SCORERS IN QUALIFYING
FIVE GOALS
Alexander KERZHAKOV
FOUR
Alexander KOKORIN
THREE
Victor FAIZULIN, Roman SHIROKOV
TWO
Denis GLUSHAKOV, Alexander SAMEDOV
ONE
Vasili BEREZUTSKIY

The coach

Influential...Capello

Fabio Capello

A former coach of several top clubs and national teams, "Don Fabio" became the first man to take Russia to the World Cup finals since 2002. Along the way he quickly established himself as one of the most influential footballing people in the country.

The key players

Igor Akinfeev

By far the best Russian goalkeeper of recent times, he made his debut for CSKA Moscow at the age of 16 and has been named the country's keeper of the year seven times since. Became the youngest Russian to play for his country when called up as an 18-year-old.

Simply the best...Akinfeev

Sergey Ignashevich

CSKA Moscow's 34-year-old centre-back may lack pace, but he is noted for his great vision, reliability, long-range passing, shooting and strength in the air.

Dictating the play...Shirokov

Roman Shirokov

Took over the captaincy from Igor Denisov during the qualifying campaign. A playmaker with high technical skill and goalscoring ability, he is known for his frank and controversial Twitter comments.

Alexander Kokorin

The striker joined Anzhi but returned to Dynamo Moscow without playing a single game due to the Makhachkala-based club's financial collapse. A rarity in the Russian league, where most of the centre-forwards are foreigners.

Shooting power...central defender Ignashevich has an eye for goal

The unanswered questions

Not the answer...Dzyuba

Will the players be physically fit?

The Russian Premier League changed its format last season and its calendar now runs from autumn until spring. This will have been extremely unusual for domestic-based players who are used to totally different campaign times.

Who will spearhead the attack?

Having tried the Russian league's top scorer Artyom Dzyuba, who stands 6ft 5in, as a substitute in a couple of games, Capello has since left him out and picked smaller strikers.

Will the team morale be strong enough?

Capello, who uses an interpreter to communicate with his squad, may be confronted with the uneasy task of dealing with a fragile mentality if things go wrong in Brazil.

Reasons to be cheerful

Experience

Despite missing the two previous World Cups, key Russian players have plenty of experience of top-level games, including two Euro finals.

Low expectations

Russian fans often regard the side as underdogs. Just reaching the knockout stage will be considered a success, while going any further will be seen as a huge bonus.

Fabio Capello

The Italian is an outstanding figure, even by comparison with any of his fellow World Cup coaches.

Reasons to be fearful

Refereeing issues...Shirokov is booked against Portugal

The officials

With Russian referees often omitted from the top competitions' lists of late, Russian players can find themselves confronted with an unusual, stricter style of officiating in international games. This can then lead to unexpected punishment for what is deemed to be an overly physical approach.

Poor technical skills

Russian players usually have more problems with individual ball control than their opponents from top European and South American teams.

A lack of young talent

Russia has not produced any new stars recently and there are few on the horizon who could add energy and flair to the squad.

World Soccer's GREAT TEAMS

Tottenham Hotspur 1960s

The first English team of the modern era to win the league and FA Cup double

Glory, glory days...Tottenham Hotspur in April 1962, with Greaves (second left) seated next to Blanchflower (centre)

In Bill Nicholson's first game as manager of Tottenham Hotspur, in October 1958, they beat Everton 10-4. Two and a half years later, his Spurs side became the first team since Aston Villa in 1897 to win the league and FA Cup double.

Rescuing Jimmy Greaves from an unhappy spell at Milan the following season, Nicholson retained the FA Cup in 1962, with Greaves scoring in the Final as they beat Burnley 3-1.

The team also reached the semi-finals of the European Cup that year, where they were unlucky to meet a Eusebio-inspired Benfica. Despite failing to overturn a 3-1 first-leg loss to the eventual winners, Tottenham drew plaudits for the way they performed in the 2-1 win at White Hart Lane.

Tottenham did conquer the continent the following year, beating Atletico Madrid in the Final of the European Cup-winners Cup to become the first English team to win a European trophy.

However, it has been claimed that the victory against Atletico was as much down to a pre-match team talk from captain Danny Blanchflower as it was the manager's strategy.

After Nicholson had eulogised almost every member of the Spanish team, Tottenham players' heads dropped. Blanchflower then spoke to the team himself, praising everyone in a white shirt. Morale was lifted and Spurs won 5-1 with two goals each from Greaves and Terry Dyson, and one from John White.

Despite their occasional differences, Nicholson and Blanchflower both shared the same football philosophy, to play attacking, attractive football and to win in style. WS

THE MANAGER AND HIS TEAM

Bill Nicholson

A right-half in the Spurs push-and-run team of the 1950s, he was determined his sides would play attractive, winning football as a manager. He encouraged his players to think for themselves on the pitch and adapt to the tactics, and this was epitomised by skipper Danny Blanchflower, who often had a frosty relationship with Nicholson.

Spent 68 years at Tottenham as a player, manager and later president.

Tactics

Nicholson's key players were his two half-backs, Blanchflower and Mackay, who kept the ball moving with precise passing before finding space themselves.

Wide men Jones and Dyson offered pace, while Smith was a battering ram at centre-forward and Greaves – who replaced Les Allen – added the skill.

Tony Marchi, Terry Medwin and Frank Saul also played their part.

THE STARTING XI

Bill Brown
Goalkeeper
Undisputed first choice throughout Spurs' glory years, but lost his place to Pat Jennings in 1964.

Peter Baker
Right-back
Had to wait for Alf Ramsey to leave before establishing himself. Emigrated to South Africa after his playing days.

Ron Henry
Left-back
Began as a centre-half before converting to full-back. Ever-present in the double-winning team.

Maurice Norman
Centre-half
First choice for both club and country until forced to retire through injury in 1965.

Danny Blanchflower
Midfielder
Captain who famously said: "The game is about glory, it's about doing things in style." He retired in 1964.

Dave Mackay
Midfielder
Regarded as one of Spurs' greatest players, he won the league as manager of Derby County.

Cliff Jones
Right-winger
With an abundance of pace, his job was to supply the forwards. Played 59 times for Wales.

John White
Inside-right
Known for his late runs into the penalty area. Killed by lightning, at the age of 27, while playing golf.

Bobby Smith
Centre-forward
Remains one of only two players to have scored more than 200 goals for Tottenham.

Jimmy Greaves
Forward
Spurs' all-time top scorer with 266 goals, including two in the 1963 European Cup-winners Cup Final.

Terry Dyson
Left-winger
Joined from non-league Scarborough. Is the only Spurs player to have scored a hat-trick against Arsenal.

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